THE VIDŪṢAKA

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THE NEW ORDER BOOK CO.
Ellis Bridge, Ahmedabad 6.
1959

Published by:

SHRI D. V. TRIVEDI,

The New Order Book Co., Ellis Bridge, Ahmedabad 6.

Price: Rs. 35.00

1959

Printed by Ramanlal J. Patel at the M S. University of Baroda Press
(Sadhana Press), Palace Road, Baroda ; July, 1959.

Dedicated to
the Memory of
My Father

Preface

I was attracted towards the study of 'The Vidūṣaka in Sanskrit dramas' when, in 1944, the University of Bombay offered the V. N. Mandalik Gold Medal and Prize for an essay on this subject. I was fortunate to win the medal and the prize.

But I was not so fortunate in getting the essay published. The disappointment that followed in subsequent years could have chilled my interest in this subject. But in the summer of 1950 I visited Ernakulam; and through the kindness of His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin, who is a great scholar of Sanskrit, I was able to witness a performance of a Sanskrit play presented by the Chākyāras, the traditional actors of Kerala. I was able to see the technique of dramatic representation on the Kerala stage at first hand, and was impressed by the managerial role that the Vidūṣaka assumed in the presentation. Then, during the past five or six years, I have done some intensive study of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. These circumstances opened up a new line of inquiry. And today, I am in a position to say that I have something very fresh to offer on the several aspects of study connected with the Vidūṣaka and the problem of humour in Sanskrit drama.

The origin and evolution of the Vidūṣaka are very controversial problems. Scholars have connected them with the question of the origin of Sanskrit drama itself. A study of the several views, and especially an elaborate examination of Keith's theory in the light of some new material made available in recent years and also my own investigation, have led me to believe that the two questions, the origin of Sanskrit drama and that of the Vidūṣaka, could be, and should be, kept apart. While it is beyond doubt that Sanskrit drama has had a religious origin, and that religious ritual and mythology have played a tremendous

part in shaping the drama and theatre movement in India, indigenous tradition does not tolerate caricature of things that have always been held sacred in this land. It is not a solemn religious ritual that will be mocked at ; but *external* elements of merriment may accompany the celebration of popular ritual. It will not be a religion that will be parodied ; but some formal practices may occasionally be ridiculed. Hence, it is not possible to admit that the Vidūṣaka embodies a caricature of some ancient ritual.

The evidence of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the traditions of the Vernacular drama in India clearly show that the earliest phase in the history of Indian theatre was the production of mythological plays. The first play, as Bharata tells us, depicted a conflict of the Devas and the Asuras. It is in the stage-portrayal of the figure of an Asura that we must discover the beginnings of a Comic character. This has a neat analogy in the evolution of Western Comedy.

When, further, the drama utilized mythological themes centering round the personal life of a God a figure like that of Nārada, who incidentally had an important share in giving shape to the *nāṭya*, can easily be conceived as a humorous companion, wise and respected, and yet loving to instigate quarrels for sheer fun and amusement.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* contains a story of a curse that fell on the Bharatas, the atonement they were advised to do, and the attempt made by a king Nahuṣa to take the dramatic art down to earth. This account together with the fact that Bharata clearly recognises the Vidūṣaka as an essential member of a dramatic troupe—apart from his being a dramatic character—are exceedingly suggestive. They indicate, for instance, that the Vidūṣaka was born as a psychological necessity, and came to stay as a social fact.

And when Sanskrit drama was launched on a prosperous career, thanks to the encouragement given by royal patronage,

the circumstance not only moulded the pattern of Sanskrit drama but fixed also the figure of the Vidūṣaka.

The other questions connected with the Vidūṣaka, his appearance, name, his caste and his use of the Prakrit, are also difficult questions; and I have not come across a satisfactory answer to them so far. However, a careful study of Sanskrit theory and dramatic practice could furnish answers to these questions, which, I hope, will bridge the unfilled gap in the study of the Vidūṣaka. As I see it, the name '*Vidūṣaka*' does not indicate 'one given to abuse', as Keith says; nor does it imply a caricature of a learned Brahmin; it means, 'a spoiler for fun,' as the Vidūṣaka's role in *Pūrvaraṅga* and his dramatic character demonstrate. Bharata positively recognises *four* types of Vidūṣakas which include an ascetic, a twice-born, a royal dependent and a pupil. If, therefore, the Vidūṣaka happens to be a Brahmin in the extant Sanskrit plays, the fact has got to be explained in the light of the norm and pattern that Sanskrit drama acquired under royal patronage, and by considerations of social, cultural and literary propriety, to which also must be traced the Vidūṣaka's use of the Prakrit.

In understanding the function and role of the Vidūṣaka, as in studying the problem of humour, I have entered into the field of Western criticism and literature; and I have correlated the material to Sanskrit theory and practice. This has enabled me to present, I believe, a very comprehensive and searching study of the function and humour of the Vidūṣaka.

A student of Sanskrit drama is convinced of the wooden and stereotyped character of the Vidūṣaka. I have gone into the causes of this decadence; and I have attempted to estimate the contribution of the Vidūṣaka to Sanskrit Comedy.

The second part of this work presents pictures of the Vidūṣakas as far as the 17th century A.D. I have tried to utilize as many literary works as could be available; and I have used two Prakrit *Saṭṭakas* as well as some *Prahasanas* in

order to study the later development of the Vidūṣaka. These are not merely literary sketches ; they have an interpretative tone which, I hope, will enable the reader to appreciate the characters in a proper perspective.

I have adopted an analytical method in tackling the several problems of my study. As these were often inter-related, cross-references were natural ; and some repetition of ideas was, therefore, unavoidable. But I have allowed it to remain as it was so that a complete treatment of a particular problem could be available in one place. Similarly I have included the character-studies within the same covers with a view to presenting a complete and a comprehensive study of the Vidūṣaka in a single volume.

Whatever new I have said in this book in connection with this interesting figure of Sanskrit drama is, to the best of my knowledge, said for the first time. In fact, until I had finished the writing of this book I had myself no idea that so much could be said on a subject like the Vidūṣaka, which has not received a major treatment so far.

I hope that my conclusions will meet with an approval of the scholarly world. If they do, I shall have the satisfaction of having offered a solution to some very puzzling problems of Sanskrit drama. But even if this work were only to stimulate serious thinking and start further investigation into problems to which my answers may not be convincing, I shall feel that my efforts have been adequately rewarded.

I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks—

to His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin, for giving me the picture of ' the Vidūṣaka on the Kerala Stage ';

to the Curator, Mathura Museum, for the photographed picture of the ' Triśikhaṇḍaka Vidūṣaka ';

to Principal Armando Menezes, for the benefit of discussion, and to my other colleagues and friends for helping me in checking up theoretical points from Western literature;

to Dr. A. N. Upadhye, for supplying me references useful for my study;

to Shri M. D. Raut, our College Librarian, for getting me all the material I wanted for this book and tracing for me doubtful or obscure bibliographical references.

Finally, I must acknowledge my indebtedness—

to the University of Bombay for the grant-in-aid of Rs. 250/- received by me from the University towards the cost of publication of this work.

' Jaduban ', Shahupuri,
Kolhapur 2.

G. K. BHAT

THE VIDŪṢAKA

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Part II

'THE FEAST OF FOOLS'

ABBREVIATIONS

Adbhuta.	Adbhutadarpaṇa.
Avi.	Avimāraka.
Bāl.	Bālacarita.
BDCRI.	Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute, Poona.
BP.	Bhāvaprakāśana.
Caṇḍa.	Caṇḍakauśika.
Candra.	Candralekhā.
DR.	Daśarūpaka.
GOS.	Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda.
HOS.	Harvard Oriental Series.
IHQ.	Indian Historical Quarterly.
JAOS.	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JAU.	Journal of the Annamalai University.
JESL.	Journal of the Ethnological Society of London.
JUB.	Journal of the University of Bombay.
Kathā.	Kathāsaritsāgara.
Kā. Sū.	Kāma-sūtra.
Kāt. Śr. Sū.	Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.
Kaumudī.	Kaumudīmahotsava.
KM.	Kāvyamālā Series, Bombay.
Karṇa.	Karṇasundarī.
Karpūra.	Karpūramañjarī.
KSS.	Kāshī Sanskrit Series.
Mālatī.	Mālatīmādhava.
Mālavikā.	Mālavikāgnimitra.
Mṛc.	Mṛcchakaṭika.
Nāgā.	Nāgānanda.
ND.	Nāṭyadarpaṇa.
NLRK.	Nāṭaka-lakṣaṇa-ratna-kośa.
NS.	Nāṭyaśāstra.
Pratijñā.	Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa.

Priya.	Priyadarśikā.
Ratnā.	Ratnāvalī.
RS.	Rasārṇavasudhākara.
RV.	Ṛgveda-saṁhitā.
Śāk.	Abhijñāna-Śākuntala.
SD.	Sāhityadarpaṇa.
Sk. Dr.	The Sanskrit Drama, Keith.
ST.	Śṛṅgāratilaka.
SV.	Svapnavāsavadatta.
TSS.	Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.
URC.	Uttara-rāma-carita.
Viddha.	Viddhaśālabhañjikā.
Vik.	Vikramorvaśīya.

Part I

THE FOOL IN THE MAKING

I

ORIGINS

The Vidūṣaka has been a popular figure of the Sanskrit stage. But unlike the " fool " in Western Comedy, the origin and evolution of the Vidūṣaka are unfortunately matters for conjecture only. In the case of the Western Fool there is ample material and accounts exist which indicate more or less definitely the circumstances under which the fool was born, and which made him grow into a comic character of the stage. The case of the Vidūṣaka in the Sanskrit dramas is different, and that for two reasons: The theoretical books, beginning with the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata, are silent on the question of the origin of the Vidūṣaka. Although Bharata explains the origin of the drama, he simply assumes the Vidūṣaka to be a necessary character in a dramatic representation; and without suggesting the probable origin and growth of this character, proceeds to explain his characteristics and function on the stage. If, on the other hand, a careful study of the dramatic literature could have furnished material to trace the origin and growth of the Vidūṣaka, the prospect is ruined by the fact that the Vidūṣaka already appears as a fixed character in Classical Sanskrit drama.

This latter is true even of the most ancient specimens of Sanskrit drama made available by modern discoveries, namely, the fragments of Buddhistic drama and the Trivandram plays ascribed to Bhāsa. The plays of Bhāsa present the Vidūṣaka both as a conventional character familiar from later plays and, at the same time, a remarkable type—in the figure of Santuṣṭa of the *Avimāraka*—which was both comic and lovable, and which Śūdraka developed into the noble figure of Maitreya. The fragments of the Buddhist drama stand in the same category. For, their discovery has helped only to take the date of the

Sanskrit drama back to a much earlier period than what was assumed so far. The *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa* and the *Hetaera Dramas* of the Buddhist poet Aśvaghoṣa present the Vidūṣaka in a conventional colour. The Vidūṣaka in the *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa* is introduced as a friend of the hero Śāriputra; he speaks Prakrit; probably he served to introduce comic relief; and in the last act when the hero joins the Buddha's fraternity and "has no need...for encumbrances like a jester," he disappears. The case of the *Hetaera Drama* is similar. "The drama shows close agreement with the classical model; the name of the Vidūṣaka is evidence of this, for not only is it connected with a real Brahmin family, but it obeys the rule that the name of the character should indicate a flower, the spring etc., for it means literally 'the off-spring of the lotus-smelling'"[1] Keith is therefore constrained to remark, "The presence of this figure is a remarkable proof of the fixed character attained by the drama, for in itself there is nothing more absurd than that a youthful ascetic seeking after truth should be encumbered by one who is a meet attendant on a wealthy merchant, Brahmin or minister. It can therefore only be supposed that Aśvaghoṣa was writing a type of drama in which the role was far too firmly embedded to permit its omission."[2]

This brings us back to where we started. An attempt has been made to link up the question of the origin of the Vidūṣaka with the origin of Sanskrit drama itself, and explain the former in the light of the theory proposed for the latter.

(1) Windisch who assumes Greek influence on Sanskrit drama lays most stress on his comparison of the Viṭa, Vidūṣaka and Śakāra with the parasite, the *servus currens* and the *miles gloriosus*, of the Greek drama, implying the origin of the Vidūṣaka from the figure of *servus currens*.[3]

[1] Sk. Dr. p. 85.

[2] Ibid. p. 82.

[3] Ibid. p. 65.

(2) Reich and E. Müller-Hess turn to the Roman mime as the form of art which exercised influence on India and point out that some of the standing types of the mime are parallelled in the Indian drama; the zēlotypos has some similarity to the Śakāra and the mōkos to the Vidūṣaka. [4]

No one could maintain today with any seriousness the theory of the Greek influence on the origin of Sanskrit drama. The evidence from Pāṇini and Patañjali, the discovery of the Bhāsa plays and of the Buddhist drama, have positively proved that the Indian drama had an early and independent origin. And although the contact of Greece with India is an historical fact, it is interesting to remember that the only word that figures in Sanskrit drama, and which shows a connection with Greece, is *Yavanikā* or *Javanikā*. But the word cannot be confined in its meaning to what is Greek; as an adjective applied to the curtain it denotes only the material of the curtain, which, as Lévi suggests, was possibly Persian tapestry which the Greek merchantships brought to India. It is not known that there was any curtain in the Greek drama; and the word by itself has no special application to the theatre-curtain.[5] The similarities of plot in the Greek and Sanskrit dramas are at best interesting only. "The motifs in Sanskrit drama have an earlier history in the literature"...and "we do find in the epic indications that it was not necessary for Greece to give to India the ideas presented in the drama." [6] In the same way, the analogies between dramatic characters are both idle and futile. The adaptation of the *servus currens* or the slave in Sanskrit drama and his transformation into a Brahmin is, as Keith remarks, "far too violent a change to be credible." [7]

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[4] Ibid. p. 67. See also footnote 2 on previous page for original references.

[5] Sk. Dr. pp. 61, 68.

[6] Ibid. p. 63.

[7] Ibid. p. 66.

And this applies to mōkos also. It is perfectly natural to suppose that the characters of Sanskrit drama have an origin in the actual life of India.

(3) According to Pischel the puppet-play, which probably originated in India only, is the source of Sanskrit drama; and it is also the origin of the Vidūṣaka.[8] The puppets made of wood or paper are managed by the director; they perform when strings are appropriately pulled; and it is presumed that a particular puppet given a comic shape and appearance and made to perform antics in order to amuse the audience was the source of the Vidūṣaka.

But the puppet-play which is primarily a form of make-belief assumes the pre-existence of the drama, as Hillebrandt correctly says;[9] being imitative in character it must necessarily be based on some form of drama the real characters of which are presented as performing puppets. Hence Keith observes, " The growth of the drama doubtless brought with it the use of puppets to imitate it in brief, and from the drama came the Vidūṣaka, and not *vice versa.*"[10]

(4) Lévi regards the Prakrit drama as the predecessor of Sanskrit drama. The Prakrit drama, according to him, depicted truthfully 'the type of Brahmin who serves as go-between in love affairs, masking his degraded trade under the cloak of religion.'[11] This type is the source of the Vidūṣaka.

Apart from the difficulty of proving the prior existence of the Prakrit drama, Lévi's view creates two more difficulties: That the Vidūṣaka is a go-between in love affairs is not a correct description of all the Vidūṣakas in the Sanskrit dramas. And secondly, if the type were originally a degraded Brahmin, it is difficult to explain why the Brahmins consented to keep him in

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[8] Ibid. p. 52.

[9] Ibid. p. 52. See also footnote 5.

[10] Sk. Dr. p. 53.

[11] Ibid. p. 66.

Sanskrit drama when, as it is alleged, they took over the Prakrit drama.[12]

(5) Konow explains the Vidūṣaka as a figure of the popular drama, and M. Schuyler holds the same opinion. Noticing the contradictions and differences between the rules given by the theorists for the creation of this character and the actual practice of the Sanskrit Dramatists, M. Schuyler believes that the hypothesis which would best explain these discrepancies is that "The Vidūṣaka originated not in the court drama under the influence of the Brāhmaṇa caste, but in the earlier plays of the different tribes of India. These primitive efforts are presumed to have been for the most part farces, their characters were doubtless taken from the actual life of that time. It was in this way that the priest-ridden people had an opportunity to express their hatred of the Brāhmaṇas which, no doubt, they eagerly embraced. By making the Vidūṣaka a degraded and contemptible wretch, who was nevertheless a Brāhmaṇa, they could give a farcical element to their rude and formless plays and at the same time take revenge on the privileged class."[13] M. Schuyler further points out that when the village-plays passed into the hands of the Brāhmaṇas who made them court-poetry, they could not dispose of the figure of the Vidūṣaka that was so firmly established in the minds of the people, but at the same time they could not see their own caste thus travestied; so they modified the vicious features of this character and emphasised only the humorous side; "this is why we find the Vidūṣaka in the extant plays a simple buffoon and fun-maker."[14] This explains also, according to him, the strange fact that the Vidūṣaka speaks in various Prakrits; had he been a creation of the Brāhmaṇa authors, they would have made him speak the literary and cultivated language which would have been easily understood by their hearers of court." They had to retain the

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[12] Ibid. p. 66.

[13] M. Schuyler, JAOS. No. XX, pp. 338 ff.

[14] Ibid.

anomaly because, "they found a popular vernacular drama already flourishing which they merely adopted and improved for their own use." M. Schuyler comes to the conclusion that, "the origin of the Vidūṣaka, therefore, must be sought in the early vernacular village-plays which preceded the classical Sanskrit Drama of India, for the character was not the invention of the Brāhmanical poets."[15]

The view of M. Schuyler presents new difficulties. The hypothesis of the 'popular vernacular drama' on which it is based lacks evidence. Further, granting that the populace loved to make fun of the privileged class, it is difficult to see why the fun should have been restricted to the Brahmin class only. Keith observes that, "it is significant that there is no trace of a comic figure of the Kṣatriya class, although the populace doubtless was as willing to make fun of the rulers as of priests."[16] Finally, the use of Prakrits in the Sanskrit drama and by the Vidūṣaka can be adequately explained on other grounds, especially the fact that the larger number of persons who took part in dramatic representation belonged to the humble classes and could speak their vernaculars only.[17]

(6) That the Sanskrit drama has had a religious origin is a hypothesis endorsed by many Western scholars. The beginnings are traced to the Ṛgveda, and the dialogue hymns are interpreted as precursors of Sanskrit drama. Lindenau finds in the figure of Vṛṣākapi of Ṛgveda (X. 86), who is a maker of mischief and the god's companion, the prototype of the Vidūṣaka.

It is true that Vṛṣākapi is shown as Indra's friend and companion, and the hymn describes the annoyance he caused to Indra's wife. But this in itself cannot justify Vṛṣākapi's connection with the Vidūṣaka, which Keith rightly regards as 'far-fetched'.[18]

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Sk. Dr. p. 66.

[17] Ibid. p. 73

[18] Ibid. p. 51. See footnote 1.

The Vṛṣākapi hymn is certainly a very obscure hymn.[19] But the refrain of the hymn which stresses the greatness of Indra, and the general trend of conversation in the hymn seem to indicate the familiar theme of Indra befriending a poor but sincere devotee even in preference to a rich but intriguing and self-interested worshipper. It must be remembered that Vṛṣākapi is regarded as Indra's son but he is not the progeny of his wife, Indrāṇī. If the words of Indra, ' Here I go observing, distinguishing between the Dāsa and the Aryan ' (v. 19), were significant, it might be assumed that Vṛṣākapi was perhaps a Dāsa chief. This would explain, on the one hand, the real cause of Indrāṇī's jealousy and anger towards Vṛṣākapi and it would suggest, on the other hand, that Indra was prepared to befriend a loyal devotee even if he were a Dāsa. The companionship of Indra and Vṛṣākapi has to be understood on this background only. If so, this basis would be inadequate to establish the relation which the Vidūṣaka has with the hero of Sanskrit drama.

The mischief of Vṛṣākapi consists in spoiling the delicate and valuable articles of household decoration belonging to Indrāṇī (*'priyā taṣṭāni'*, v. 5); and, for ought we know, Indrāṇī's complaint may have been prompted more by her anger and jealousy than by a real state of things. But a mischief of this kind, even if it were real, cannot be associated with the so-called antics of a comic figure.

Further, Vṛṣākapi has a wife; he expresses a longing for Indrāṇī (v. 7); he is leaving Indra on account of the complaints that Indrāṇī has made against him; Indra effects a reconciliation between his wife and Vṛṣākapi, and persuades Vṛṣākapi to stay on. These facts do not afford any suggestive parallels to the usual set-up in which the Vidūṣaka is found in Sanskrit drama.

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[19] See Prof. H. D. Velankar's annotated translation of this hymn (RV. X. 86) in JUB, vol. XXII, Part 2, Sept. 1953; pp. 11-15.

It seems that the uncouth appearance of Vṛṣākapi, especially his being a monkey (*kapi*), and his obviously uncouth speech (vv. 7, 16), may have suggested a similarity between Vṛṣākapi and the Vidūṣaka. But then, if some dramatists like Kālidāsa have described the resemblance of Vidūṣaka to a monkey, it is only a feature of ugliness calculated to provoke simple laughter. It is well-known that ugly appearance is alone what is required for a comic figure as a source of laughter on the stage ; it is not necessary that a comic figure should be monkey-like. In fact, the Sanskrit dramatists have introduced varying details in order to present the funny aspect of the Vidūṣaka's figure. There appears to be no special reason, therefore, to regard Vṛṣākapi as the prototype of the Vidūṣaka.

(7) Keith endeavours to prove religious origin for Sanskrit drama. But he is not prepared to trace it to the dialogue hymns of the Ṛgveda. These hymns are enigmatic in character and cannot, therefore, warrant a definite conclusion. Keith seeks the origin of the Sanskrit drama in Vedic ritual, where he discovers the origin of the Vidūṣaka too. In fact, according to Keith, the fact that the origin of the Vidūṣaka can be discovered in Vedic ritual strengthens in itself the conclusion that the Sanskrit drama has had a religious origin.

Keith finds this origin in the ritual of Mahāvrata. This ritual is " plainly a rite intended to strengthen at the winter solistice the sun so that it may resume its vigour and make fruitful the earth...The same ceremony is marked by a curious episode ; a Brahmin student and a hetaera are introduced as engaged in coarse abuse of each other, and in the older form of the ritual we actually find that sexual union as a fertility rite is permitted, though later taste dismissed the practice as undesirable. "[20] It is in this episode and especially in the figure of the Brahmacārin that Keith finds the prototype of the Vidūṣaka. He writes :

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[20] Sk. Dr. pp. 24-25.

"The name (Vidūṣaka) denotes him as given to abuse, and not rarely he and one of the attendants on the queen engage in contests of acrid repartee, in which he certainly does not fare the better. It would be absurd to ignore in this regard the dialogue between the Brahmin and the hetaera in the Mahāvrata, where the exchange of coarse abuse is intended as a fertility rite."[21]

That the Vidūṣaka happens to be a Brahmin is explained by Keith on this hypothesis, namely, that the original figure in the Mahāvrata is a Brahmin who conducts a hot conversation with the hetaera. The explanation for his use of Prakrit is as follows:

"....the fact that he (Vidūṣaka) is treated as a Brahmin is conclusive that the abusive side of his character is the more important. It is to this doubtless that his use of Prakrit is due; it cannot be conceived that a dialogue of abuse was carried on by the Brahmin in the sacred language, which the hetaera of the primitive social conditions of the Mahāvrata could not possibly be expected to appreciate."[22]

Keith suggests another religious element in the character of the Vidūṣaka, and it is derived from the ritual of Soma purchase for Soma sacrifice. According to some versions the seller of Soma, who is a Śūdra, is at the close of the ritual ceremony deprived of the price and beaten or pelted with clods. The ritual is certainly a mimic account of the winning of Soma from the custody of the Gandharvas. Keith thinks that we have in the Vidūṣaka,

"the reminiscence of the figure of the Śūdra....possibly it is to this that the hideous appearance attributed to the Vidūṣaka is due."[23]

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[21] Ibid. p. 39.

[22] Ibid. pp. 39-40; also, p. 73.

[23] Ibid. p. 39.

It was necessary to quote extensively from Keith because he has not only mentioned and criticised all possible views on the subject, but has also attempted, by virtue of such criticism as well as independent arguments, to establish his own theory. Having understood Keith's own view in his own words, we must see whether it has been successfully proved.

It must be made clear at the outset that the theory of religious origin (as against secular origin) of the Indian drama is supported on very solid grounds. Modern researches have enabled us to antedate the origin of the Indian drama to quite a few centuries before the Christian era. And the vital connection of Śiva with the dramatic art, coupled with the interpretation that Śiva is a pre-Aryan deity, has further pushed the date of the Indian drama to a pre-Aryan period.[24] But while it is perfectly logical to trace the Sanskrit drama to religious beginnings, is it equally correct to trace the origin of a dramatic character like the Vidūṣaka to the same source?

(i) In the first place, if Keith thinks that the connection between Vṛṣākapi of the Ṛgveda and the Vidūṣaka is "far-fetched", as it doubtless is, is his analogy from the Mahāvrata episode quite convincing? The texts of the Aitareya and the Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyakas which give the Mahāvrata ritual do not mention the dialogue between the Brahmacārin and the hetaera.[25] The Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra says, "The wanton girl and the Vedic student shout at each other." The prose commentary adds, "The two mutually exchange disgusting speeches."[26]

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[24] See Dr. M. Ghosh, *Contributions to The History of Hindu Drama : Its Origin and Diffusion*. pp. 3-7.

[25] The Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā, XXXIV. 5, has the following : ब्रह्मचारी च पुंश्चली चर्तीयेते सर्वा हि भूते वाचो वदन्ति मिथुनं चरन्ति संवत्सरं वा एते प्रजायमाना सत्रमासते तेषां संवत्सरेणैव प्रजननमन्तर्धीयते यन्मिथुनं चरन्ति... ।

[26] Read, Kāt. Śr. Sūtra, XIII. iii. 6-7:
पुंश्चलीब्रह्मचारिणावन्योऽन्यमाक्रोशतः ।
Comm. 'परस्परं उद्वेगकरं वाक्यं भाषेते ।'

The actual exchange of words is to be found in Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.[27] The description given here—the position which the Puṁścalī and the Brahmacārin are to take, the words they are to speak, and the repetition of the performance three times—clearly betrays a symbolical and ritual purpose. What is interesting to note is that the words, though abusive in character, are spoken only in ritual fulfilment; and the text gives the words *in Sanskrit*. One might at the most say that the abusive language sometimes found in dramatic dialogue has had a ritual sanction behind its use! This evidence, however, does not prove Keith's point.

(ii) Further, it is not universally true that the Vidūṣaka and a maid of the queen are shown in Sanskrit drama as 'engaged in contests of acrid repartee'. It is really in a late Prakrit drama, the *Karpūramañjarī* of Rājaśekhara (tenth cent. A.D.), that we find something which is analogous to the description given by Keith. For here, in the first act, we have a hot exchange of words between the Vidūṣaka and the queen's maid who, supported by her mistress, hits ironically at the Vidūṣaka, and the Vidūṣaka, angered yet discomfited, finally gives up the quarrel.[28] The usual picture in classical drama is that of a maid blaming or cursing the Vidūṣaka for his gluttonous habits and that of the Vidūṣaka avoiding the queen's maid, conscious of his own stupidity and afraid of being duped by her. It is true that Aśvaghoṣa has the character of a Gaṇikā; and the Vidūṣaka in *Mṛcchakaṭika* hits uncouthly at Vasantasenā's mother and at the class of courtesans; but these instances cannot really prove

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[27] Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, IV. iii. 9-12:

पूर्वेण आग्नीध्रीयं ब्रह्मचारी अन्तर्वेदि उदङ्मुखः तिष्ठेत्। बहिर्वेदि पुंश्चली दक्षिणामुखी ॥ ९ ॥

सा ब्रूयात् दुश्चरितिन्नवकीर्णिन्निति ॥ १० ॥

धिक् त्वा जाल्मि पुंश्चली ग्रामस्य मार्जनि पुरुषस्य पुरुषस्य शिश्नप्रणेजनि इति ब्रह्मचारी ॥ ११ ॥

एवं आवृतीयं व्यत्यासम् ॥ १२ ॥

[28] *Karpūramañjarī*, act I.

anything. As a matter of fact, such characters as a stupid Brahmin, a courtesan and aggressive maids are to be found in the actual life of India. The dramatists could easily have picked up these characters from the social life they knew. For a scene between the Vidūṣaka and the Ceṭī, it is not necessary to go back to an episode in the ritual ceremony of Mahāvrata.

(iii) Thus, to trace the Vidūṣaka to the ritual of the Mahāvrata on the basis of the alleged abuse exchanged between the Brahmin and the hetaera, and then to assert that since the Vidūṣaka is treated as a Brahmin the abusive side of his character is more important, are arguments which confuse the real issue. It is not possible to connect the Vidūṣaka with the Brahamacārin of the Mahāvrata: Neither the texts of the Mahāvrata nor logical reasoning could support such a connection. Similarly, the abusive aspect in Vidūṣaka's character is not wholly true and therefore any emphasis on this aspect will make the picture of the Vidūṣaka, lop-sided, exaggerated and consequently untrue.

But it is doubtful whether Keith is correct in explaining the etymological meaning of the word *Vidūṣaka*. The root *dūṣ* does not mean 'abuse' but 'spoil' or 'blame'; and the preposition *vi* only indicates a particular mode. The word applied to the character thus means, that the Vidūṣaka is 'a spoiler for fun' and does it in his own characteristic humorous way.[29] If Keith has sought to connect the Vidūṣaka with the Mahāvrata on the basis of the meaning of the word, it is clear that his very foundation is weak.

(iv) Keith rejects the views of the origin of Sanskrit drama from popular and Prakrit plays on one important ground, namely that the character of the Vidūṣaka, who represents a degraded Brahmin, could not have been maintained by the Brahmins who moulded the Sanskrit drama. Had they taken this character from the popular or vernacular play, they would

[29] See further under the heading, NAME.

e suppressed it in order to suppress the travestry of their class. Keith, therefore, seeks an explanation for the pulsory retention of this character in the religious motive. apparently suggests that the makers of Sanskrit drama d not avoid the Vidūṣaka because he came from the ritual ne Mahāvrata and the episode of Soma purchase in the Soma ifice. This could have been a plausible explanation if the al origin of the Vidūṣaka were indisputably proved. But t from this, it is not necessary to take the help of religion itual to explain why the Vidūṣaka happens to be a Brahmin; e are other grounds on which such explanation can be sibly given and they will be discussed in the course of this y.[30] What is necessary to remember in this connection is fact that the type characterised in the figure of the Vidūṣaka social type; and if Keith is prepared to deny borrowing n Greek drama and Roman mime of the character of Śakāra, r the reflexion that such a figure can be explained perfectly ly from the actual life of India in the period of Bhāsa and *Mṛcchakaṭika* ",[31] there is no reason why an untutored oid Brahmin, along with palace-maids and the courtesan, ld not be found in 'the actual life of India'.

(v) It follows that Keith's explanation of the use of krit by the Vidūṣaka cannot be accepted, once it is seen that ritual origin of the Vidūṣaka is absolutely uncertain. But e is a further error in the argument. In the first place, the s of the Mahāvrata do not mention anywhere that the hange of conversation between the Brahmacārin and the ton girl was carried in Prakrit, or that Prakrit was anywhere l in the course of a ritual ceremony. There is no authority such an assumption. And even if such an assumption were le it will be contradicted by the parallel of the Horse sacri- that Keith himself has furnished. He writes,

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[30] See further under the heading, CASTE.

[31] Sk. Dr. p. 66.

"The ritual purpose of this abuse is undeniable; it is aimed at producing fertility, and has a precise parallel in the untranslatable language employed in the horse sacrifice during the period when the unlucky chief queen is compelled to lie beside the slaughtered horse, in order to secure, we may assume, the certainty of obtaining a son for the monarch whose conquests are thus celebrated."[32]

If the words which are "untranslatable" and which are to be spoken by the queen, a woman at that, are given in pure Sanskrit in the text of the Aśvamedha, what reason have we to believe that the exchange between the Brahmin and the hetaera in the Mahāvrata must be in the Prakrit language?[33] In fact, the words *are* given in Sanskrit, as already noticed.

It is necessary to mention diverse facts in this connection. The Javanese drama which owes its origin to India borrows the figure of the clown too. But unlike the Vidūṣaka of Sanskrit drama who uses Prakrit, the clown of the Wayang Orang speaks in the highest dialect analogous to Sanskrit of India![34] It is presumable that the Indian drama, in its pre-historic period was composed entirely in Sanskrit and that the Vidūṣaka in this drama in all probability spoke Sanskrit, instead of Prakrit; it is this character that furnished the prototype of the Javanese clown.[35] Here is an indirect evidence at least to show that the language used by the Vidūṣaka may not have been Prakrit from the very beginning when the character originated.

It is true that the theory prescribes the use of Prakrit for the Vidūṣaka; and the Classical Sanskrit plays exemplify this

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[32] Ibid. p. 25.

[33] See also, Miss Godavari Ketkar, *Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra* (Marathi), p. 334.

[34] Cf. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Notes on the Javanese Theatre*, Rupam, 7; quoted by M. Ghosh, *History of Hindu Drama*, op. cit., p. 39.

[35] Cf. M. Ghosh, op. cit., p. 39.

rule. But we also find that the Sūtradhāra speaks in Sanskrit; the only exception being the *Cārudatta* of Bhāsa and the *Mṛcchakaṭika;* although Bharata has not mentioned that the Sūtradhāra should be a Brahmin. Contrarily, Indra in Bhāsa's *Karṇabhāra* speaks in Prakrit although he appears in the disguise of a Brahmin!

These conflicting facts surely indicate that the language spoken by a particular character cannot be a clue to the origin of that character. The use of particular language by dramatic characters was governed by theoretical rules and the conventions accepted by writers. It is also probable that an additional factor furnished by the motive and purpose of dramatic representation may have affected the language to be spoken by a character. It is to these considerations, and not to religious elements, that we must turn in order to explain the use of Prakrit by the Vidūṣaka.[36]

It is necessary, therefore, to make a fresh approach to the solution of the problem. Keith admits that, "the popular origin of the Vidūṣaka is obvious, but the point is whether this origin is religious or secular..." This is precisely the problem. Keith is unwilling to accept secular origin which he regards "manifestly unnecessary and illegitimate, when the descent of this figure from the Vedic literature is clear"; and he says that the supporters of the theory of secular origin admit that "the Brahmin of the Mahāvrata, possibly with reminiscences of the Śūdra in the Soma sale" offers us the prototype of this figure. But we have seen that the connection with the assumed prototype is not convincing.[37]

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[36] See also under the heading, LANGUAGE.

[37] Sk. Dr. p. 50. J. T. Parikh appears to be attempting to lend support to Keith's theory that the Brahmacārin of the Mahāvrata is the figure out of which the Vidūṣaka developed. Prof. Parikh assumes that the Vidūṣaka is a young boy, a Brahmin student (Cf. *The Vidūṣaka: Theory and Practice*, pp.

It must be stated that the acceptance of the theory of religious origin of the Indian drama could not necessarily imply the acceptance of the view that the Vidūṣaka originated in a similar manner. The two assumptions must be distinguished from each other; and if the Vidūṣaka did have a religious origin, it must be independently demonstrated.

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iv-v; 15-19). His second assumption appears to be that the Brahmacārin in the first act of SV. is the Vidūṣaka Vasantaka (Cf. *Bulletin of the Chunilal Gandhi Vidyabhavan*, No. 2, Surat, August 1955, pp. 15-19).

The first assumption is based on the use of the word *baṭu* which is often applied to the Vidūṣaka. It is true that the word primarily denotes a young Brahmin student. But how can it be a ground for a sweeping generalisation that the Vidūṣaka is young in age, almost a boy? It is impossible to forget the age of the heroes of Sanskrit dramas with whom the Vidūṣaka is associated as their boon companion. The heroes are certainly not young boys, except in a few cases; and a boy Vidūṣaka could hardly be imagined as a mirth-provoking and 'worldly wise' companion of a polygamous hero; and both addressing each other by the intimate term '*vayasya*', as prescribed in theory. Secondly, Harṣa, Rājaśekhara and Mahādeva definitely show their Vidūṣakas as married men. Rājaśekhara shows the Vidūṣaka as a man of family and actually introduces the Brāhmaṇī on the stage in *Viddha*. The Vidūṣaka in *Adbhuta*. boasts that his wife produces a baby every year. It is absurd to dismiss these facts as 'comic'. Thirdly, if Kālidāsa's Māḍhavya calls himself 'Yuvarāja' (*Śāk.* II), it is no indication that he is a young boy: We must remember that Duṣyanta, whose companion the Vidūṣaka is, is twice-married and is not himself a young boy. Further, History amply demonstrates that an heir-apparent is not necessarily a young boy. As long as a monarch is alive and is ruling, his son (or, his brother) continues to be called 'Yuvarāja', whatever his age. The reference is, therefore, Kālidāsa's subtle suggestion that

There is a tendency to disregard the evidence furnished by tradition; but this is unjustified. It is certainly necessary to sift such evidence very carefully; but when such evidence is nearly all that we possess as a starting point of an inquiry it cannot be treated lightly, much less ignored, as it has been done. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata and the actual dramas must lead our way, I think, to the solution of the present problem.

Duṣyanta had no son who could be called by the title; hence, the Vidūṣaka usurps the title 'Yuvarāja'. The term '*baṭu*' must, therefore, be interpreted in the same sense in which 'chap' or 'old boy' are interpreted in colloquial English. Finally, it is significant that no Sanskrit theorist, despite their flair for trivialities, ever attempted to fix the 'age of the Vidūṣaka'. It would have been ridiculous to do so; for a comic figure is truly 'age-less'. The age of the Vidūṣaka in Sanskrit dramas will have to be determined, if one is so interested, separately for each Vidūṣaka on the strength of the particular textual evidence.

The second assumption is equally fatuous. Granting that the Vidūṣaka is an accomplice in the minister's plot, it is clear from the text that his role is that of a real companion to the hero. This explains why the Vidūṣaka endeavours to comfort the king in his misery, keeps up his belief in the supposed death of Vāsavadattā, and never betrays the secret till the time is ripe for revelations. The Vidūṣaka plays this assigned part deliberately for the success of the plot. Did not Rumaṇvat do the same, weeping and sorrowing himself to death with Udayana, despite his knowledge that Vāsavadattā was not burnt in the fire? When therefore the Vidūṣaka asserts that Vāsavadattā is dead, or when he dismisses Udayana's vision of Vāsavadattā as a dream and an illusion, he is only fulfilling his part. The Vidūṣaka's reference to 'Yakṣiṇī by name Avantisundarī' has a simple explanation. Vāsavadattā was staying in the Magadhan palace as a companion and friend of Padmāvatī. No one had any knowledge of her true identity.

A striking fact that we learn from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the distinction which Bharata makes between the Vidūṣaka as an actor and Vidūṣaka as a character in the drama. It is a very important fact that Bharata should include the Vidūṣaka along with the Sūtradhāra and his Assistant as a necessary and inevitable *member of the dramatic troupe*. There is an obvious reason for this inclusion. Bharata has a realistic notion about the primary purpose of a dramatic representation. The drama may mean different things to different kinds of audiences;[38] but its central purpose is relaxation, amusement and pleasure. The *Nāṭya* was created to meet the demand of a diversion by providing a social amusement, which was both audible and visible, and in which all without exception could take part.[39] And Kāli-

Her personal charm, sweetness of temper, her skill and the mystery surrounding her, could easily give rise to a belief among the inmates of the harem that she was a Yakṣiṇī, an extraordinary woman. It was not difficult for the Vidūṣaka to have heard such opinion from some palace maid. The argument that the Brahmacārin mentions Rumaṇvat in his report but not the Vidūṣaka, is an argument form silence; but the fact conforms to the rule, *prādhānyena vyapadeśā bhavanti*. Similarly, the argument that the *Bṛhatkathā* describes the Vidūṣaka as having accompanied the minister and Vāsavadattā to Magadha, is no evidence that Bhāsa has done so. It is wrong to interpret facts in a work of art by a criterion derived from its source. But the basic error in the above assumption is this: If the Brahmacārin is really the Vidūṣaka, how is it that Padmāvatī, Kāñcukīya and the maid, who all have already met him, never recognise him when he comes to stay in the palace as a companion of Udayana? Is Bhāsa such a poor artist as to create a basically absurd situation in his plot-construction? (See my edition of SV for an interpretation of the roles of the Brahmacārin and the Vidūṣaka in this play.)

38 NS. GOS, I. 107–115; KM, I. 73–81; KSS, I. 103–113.

39 NS. GOS, I. 11–12; the same in KM and KSS.

dāsa puts his finger on the same point when he says, "The drama alone can satisfy in diverse ways the people who widely differ in tastes."[40] If, thus, the drama were to be a source of pleasure, it was natural that Bharata should think of an actor who would keep the spectators amused from the very beginning. The Vidūṣaka appears in the preliminaries of a dramatic representation, known as *Pūrvaraṅga,* and provides laughter by his appearance, talk and gestures.[41] This role that the Vidūṣaka plays is irrespective of the drama proper, which may or may not have contained comic elements. Its purpose is pure fun; and it must have been all the more necessary, we may presume, if the drama were of a serious or exalted type. The role of the Vidūṣaka in the preliminaries of the drama is determined solely by the psychological and social expectation of amusement by way of laughter. If, therefore, the other actors who participate in the *Pūrvaraṅga,* namely the Sūtradhāra, his wife and the assistant, are not to be traced to any religious and ritual source (as they cannot be), it is inconceivable why the Vidūṣaka, like them an actor and a member of the dramatic troupe, should at all be so traced. The origin of the actor Vidūṣaka must, therefore, be seen in the fulfilment of the psychological and social need which a dramatic representation creates. Bharata correctly provides that this Vidūṣaka should be a "twice-born", which does not mean a Brahmin, but a member of any of the first three castes.

If the distinction of the Vidūṣaka as an actor and as a character has any significance, it means that the Vidūṣaka first appeared only as a member of the dramatic troupe; and then, in a successive development of the drama, he stepped from the preliminaries into the actual drama, and thus became a dramatic character. The reason for this transformation or dual role is obvious. If the Vidūṣaka provided mirth and amusement in

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[40] *Mālavikāgnimitra,* I.4: नाट्यं भिन्नरुचेर्जनस्य बहुधाऽप्येकं समाराधनम् ।

[41] NS. GOS, V. 134 ff.; KM, 125 ff.; KSS, 137 ff.

the preliminaries, his presence in the drama proper would surely ensure its enjoyment by the general audience. Such a consideration must have led to the creation of a comic character. This motive, again, is psychological, determined by the necessary appeal of dramatic representation.

Yet, one question still remains : How was the first comic character, or the Vidūṣaka if he was so called, like ? The classical dramas do not furnish an answer to this question, because the Vidūṣaka in them is already a stock character. We must turn to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* again.

Bharata tells us that he approached Grand-father Brahmā, making preparations for a stage performance; and at his instruction presented, at the Festival of Indra's Banner, first the Nāndī with its eight limbs and following, he devised an imitation in which the Demons were shown to be conquered by the Gods and which involved angry exchange of words, flight, cutting by weapons and duels.[42] In another place, we learn that Bharata was instructed by Brahmā to perform *Amṛtamanthana* which was composed by the Lord himself as a *Samavakāra*.[43] And further at His suggestion Bharata took the performing troupe to Śiva and presented on the majestic background of the Himālaya the performance of *Tripuradāha*, a *Dima*.[44] Patañjali refers, while elucidating a grammatical point in Pāṇini, to the mimic performance of 'the killing of Kaṁsa' and 'the binding of Bali'.[45]

It is presumable, therefore, that the very early performances consisted of the conflict between the gods and the demons. Bharata assures us that the performance delighted the gods.

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[42] NS. GOS, I. 54-58; KM, I. 20-24; KSS, I. 54-58; M. Ghosh's translation, I. 55–58, p. 9.

[43] NS. GOS, KM, KSS, IV. 1–3.

[44] NS. GOS, KM, KSS, IV. 10.

[45] *Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣya*, on III. i.26 : ये तावद् एते शोभनिका (v.l. शौभिका) नामैते प्रत्यक्षं कंसं घातयन्ति प्रत्यक्षं बलिं बन्धयन्तीति ।

But the demons were provoked, apparently because they were shown to be defeated ; but perhaps also because, the actors who took on the roles of the demons represented them in ridiculous light and caused laughter among the assembled crowds in the heavenly regions.

It is to be expected that a demon would be represented as a hideous character ; and since the final outcome here is his discomfiture, it carries with it an element of ridicule, which can be neatly understood on the basis of mass psychology. It can further be turned to laughter by an actor while portraying the character's demonaic appearance, his fall or flight, and his shouting or howling. It is, therefore, quite possible that the earliest representation of a comic character was the figure of Asura, or symbol of evil.

This possibility has a particular relevancy to the character of the Vidūṣaka as affected in Sanskrit drama. Among the stock traits of this character, the most important are his hideous or ugly appearance, his Brahmin caste and his use of Prakrit speech. It is not at all difficult to explain why the Vidūṣaka happens to be a Brahmin and speaks Prakrit on other perfectly plausible grounds ; it is not necessary to insist on a religious motive for the purpose. Nor does the association of Brahmanic and demonaic characters present any self-contradiction ; for according to the renowned traditions of the Vedic period and of the Brāhmaṇa literature, the gods and the demons both were the 'sons of Prajāpati' ; and their opposition pertained only to modes of thought and behaviour. The real question, therefore, is to account for the ugly appearance of the Vidūṣaka. It is natural that a character deformed in body should be a source of laughter on the stage. But would it not be equally natural to have left this detail to the actor himself ? What is the necessity of a theoretical prescription, when the actor could easily have devised appropriate make-up, and when the appearance was only one minor aspect of the character ? That Bharata should find it necessary to prescribe on the appearance

of the Vidūṣaka is, to my mind, an inevitable legacy from the Deva-Asura stage of the early beginnings of the drama. The hideous appearance of the Asura is a fact that has got to be accepted.

The connection between the representation of the Asura and comic characters will appear to be supported by the evidence of the dramatic practice known from later days. It is significant to recall that Śakāra in *Mṛcchakaṭika* who is a villain is shown as a comic character, provoking no doubt anger, but also ridicule and laughter. The Vidūṣaka is shown as an associate of the demon King Rāvaṇa in *Adbhutadarpaṇa* of Mahādeva (first half of 17th Cent.). And in the Marathi drama of the early phase (19th Cent. A.D.) when mythological and epic themes supplied the dramatic plot, the demon invariably appeared as a character hideous in appearance but provoking mirth. A typical instance is the Rākṣasa in *Saubhadra* who, as instructed by Kṛṣṇa, carries away the sleeping Subhadrā from her bed-chamber and leaves her in the region of the mount Raivataka, to be discovered by the disguised Arjuna.

A clear analogy in this connection is the representation of evil or Satan as a comic character in the early Western drama.

> " The Old Miracles ", says Prof. Gordon, " had always their bright patches of comedy, a handy sheep-stealer, with the sheep hidden in the cradle, or some potent and homely figure like Noah's wife. Also, if Deity must be spared, then devilry must bounce for it, and be amusing ; so that Satan and his vices become comic characters in England. It was in the reign of Elizabeth that old Vice went out on the regular English stage and Mr. Clown, as we know him from Shakespeare, came in. "[46]

It is said that the term " Vice " is used in both the senses, clown and tempter. Prof. Thorndike tells us that Vice is,

" not merely a mirth-provoker, he is also the chief mischief-

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46 George Gordon, *Shakespearian Comedy*, p. 62.

maker, and he belongs to the moral allegory as well as to the farcical interlude."[47]

There is, thus, no doubt that " the Vice is a buffoon, the source of much laughter. "

At the same time we cannot afford to ignore the fact that the tendency to laugh and ridicule is instinctive in humanity. " A tendency to burlesque and caricature....is one of the earliest talents displayed by people in a rude state of society. An appreciation of and sensitiveness to ridicule, and a love of that which is humorous, are found even among savages....In fact art itself, in its earliest forms, is caricature ; for it is only by that exaggeration of features which belongs to caricature that unskilled draughtsmen could make themselves understood."[48] Hence, J. Feibleman says that explicit instances of comedy are probably as old as humanity. From the scant remains that have come down to us it is not unsafe to infer that comedy was in existence in the most primitive times ; the cave-drawings of the Paleolithic period which offer an evidence of caricature are a case in point.[49]

Likewise, we must assume that the fool is ancient. The professional fool and the court-jester were known in ancient India ; the tradition continues. We are told that king Amanullah of Afghanistan maintained, with no sense of incongruity, at once a private broadcasting station and a court-jester.

" One must suppose ", says Prof. Gordon, " that there have always been clowns. We appear to need them, and therefore they are born. There is a moment, when we have all had our say about the world, and sufficiently tired each other with our wisdom, when it is felt that the fool should be heard. Folly is free; it can say what it likes; and brings

[47] A. H. Thorndike, *English Comedy*, pp. 50–51.

[48] Thomas Wright, quoted in Carolyn Wells' *Outline of Humour*, p. 25

[49] J. Feibleman, *In Praise of Comedy*, p. 17 ff.

messages sometimes from strange territory: that half-explored tract or no man's land, where sense and nonsense fraternize."[50]

The points that I wish to make are the following:

(1) The origin of the Vidūṣaka is certainly obscure. It is true that Sanskrit drama has a religious origin. But it is not possible on that ground to trace the Vidūṣaka to Vṛṣākapi of the Ṛgveda or to the Brahmin of the Mahāvrata, with a touch of the Śudra in the Soma sale.

(2) The instinct towards caricature is natural to humanity. We need amusement and laughter. It is out of this psychological necessity that the fools are born; and, therefore, they are ancient.

(3) But if a formal origin is to be discovered for the Vidūṣaka, it must be sought, according to the evidence of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in the figure of the Asura, who must have been represented both as a hideous and as a comic character. It is in this sense that the Vidūṣaka may be said to have a popular and *religious* origin.

[50] George Gordon, op. cit., p. 60.

II

EVOLUTION: SHAPING INFLUENCES

It was seen that Bharata conceived the Vidūṣaka as an actor and as a dramatic character. The question of origin and evolution, it is obvious, does not affect the actor. It pertains only to the Vidūṣaka as a character in the drama. But how the first Asura type of comic character finally evolved into the stock figure of the Sanskrit drama, it is difficult to say. It is a blank—both as far as theory and practice are concerned.

But the evolution of drama has followed, more or less, similar lines of development in most of the countries. And since the Vidūṣaka belongs to the type of drama known as Comedy, the analogy of the origin and development of the European drama may perhaps prove to be interesting.

The term comedy is to be derived from the Greek word *Komos* which means a festal procession. Such festal processions were particularly characterised by phallic element which was designed to secure the success of crops and drive away malign influences. Hence, "In comedy the emphasis still falls on the phallic element and the fertility marriage," and "has been marked all through history by an erotic tone, and in its lower manifestations relied openly on the stimulus of sex-attraction."[1] The *Komos*, or Revel of Dionysius, even implied general union of the sexes. And the worship of Dionysius, with which was later associated the worship of Bacchus, was accomplished by much reckless and drunken licence; laughter, song and dance were part of the ritual worship accorded to these deites. The spirit of ridicule also touched in an irreverent way upon sacred things; for, Jupiter and the Oracle at Delphi were actually

[1] F. M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, pp. 68-69.

caricatured.[2] The followers of Dionysius gave grotesque representations and hysterical orgies in which the mummers disguised themselves as animals with horrible masks. These representations and phallic processions were at first left in the hands of amateur actors.

Cornford points out that the early Greek religious ritual dramas were taken over into comedy. The fertility drama of the year god, the marriage of the old year, transformed into the New, interrupted by the death and the revival of the hero: this is the classic theme of Greek Comedy. The God who every year is born, his mother and his Bride, the Antagonist who kills him, the Medicine man who restores him to life: these are the stock characters. "When the drama lost its serious magical intent, probably the Antagonist and the Doctor were the first to become grotesque...these two figures gave rise to two professional types, the swaggering soldier and the Learned Doctor..."[3]

The parallel of the 'Feast of Fools' is perhaps more interesting and instructive. This Feast which was very common in the mediaeval period may be traced, as Chambers points out, to the Church of Constantinople (824-867 A.D.) and finally to the Pagan Kalends. It was called a Feast of Fools obviously because those who took part in it, namely the lower clergy, played the fool.[4]

The Feast took place in Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches on Innocent's Day or on other dates. It was a day of the Vicars, the sub-deacons, the lower clergy, who for the most part were of peasant or bourgeois extraction. This low birth of the participants coupled with the fact that the expenses of the Feast were met partly by the Chapter, partly by dues levied upon the bystanders, fix the nature of the Feast. "It was

[2] Ibid. pp. 29–30.

[3] Ibid. p. 202.

[4] E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. 1, p. 334.

largely an ebullition of the natural lout beneath the cossack."[5] The ceremonies of the Feast included the choosing of the 'Bishop' or the 'Arch-bishop' of Fools who wear mitres and pastoral staffs and have crosses borne before them, as if they were on visitation. "They take the office,..and give Benedictions ..In exempt Churches...a 'Pope' of Fools is naturally chosen.. The Clergy wear the garments of the laity or of Fools, and the laity put on priestly or monastic robes."[6] As regards the customs of the Feast we find: "Priests and Clerks may be seen wearing masks and monstrous visages at the hours of office. They dance in the Choir dressed as women, panders or minstrels. They sing wanton songs..They eat black puddings at the horn of the altar while the celebrant is saying mass. They play at dice there. They cense with stinking smoke from the soles of old shoes. They run and leap through the church without a blush at their own shame. Finally they drive about the town and its theatres in shabby traps and carts and rouse the laughter of their fellows and bystanders in infamous performances with indecent gestures and verses scurrilous and unchaste."[7] From a psychological view-point, all this was for the lower clergy "a reaction from the wonted restraints of choir discipline. Familiarity breeds contempt and it was almost an obvious sport to burlesque the sacred and tedious ceremonies with which they were only too painfully familiar."[8]

The Feast of the Fools in its complete lack of any restraint had created tremendous scandals and the religious and the royal authorities had often to intervene to suppress it. But it was not altogether suppressed. It had its origin in the popular celebration of Kalends and throughout it did not lack a popular element. It was popular "not only with the inferior clergy themselves, but with the spectacle-loving bourgeois of the

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[5] Ibid. p. 325.
[6] Ibid. p. 295.
Ibid. p. 294.
Ibid. p. 325.

cathedral towns."[9] "The bourgeois crowded into the Cathedral to see and share in the revel. The Fool Bishop in his turn left the precincts and made his progress through the city streets, while his satellities played their pranks abroad for the entertainment of the mob."[10] Thus, "we find a second tradition of Feast of Fools in which the *fous* are no longer vicars but bourgeois and the *dominus festi* is a popular 'king' or 'prince', rather than a clerical 'bishop'."[11]

The fifteenth Century was an age of guilds in every department of social life in Europe. We, therefore, find the religious confrèries or the literary *puys* giving rise to their frivolous counterparts in the *compagnies des fous* or *Sociétés joyeuses.* These gave performances of the contemporary comedy known as farces, moralities, *sotties* and *sermon joyeux.*[12] Of these, the *Sottie* and the *Sermon joyeux* have definitely to be regarded as the contribution of the Feast of Fools to the types of comedy. Of the *Sotties,* Chambers informs us that they are, "on the face of them farces in which the actors are *sots* or *fous*.... It is their humour and their mode of satire to represent the whole world from king to clown."[13] It is this spirit that runs through all successive creations of the Fools down to Shakespeare. Chambers writes: "...Whatever outward appearance Shakespeare intended his Fools to bear, there can be no doubt that in their dramatic use as vehicles of general social satire they closely recall the manner of the *Sotties.* Touchstone is the type. He uses his folly like a stalking horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit."[14]

This account reveals the following stages of development: (i) ritual origin—religious and clerical; (ii) its adoption into

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[9] Ibid. p. 293.
[10] Ibid. p. 372.
[11] Ibid. p. 373.
[12] Ibid. p. 380.
[13] Ibid. p. 381.
[14] Ibid. p. 389.

Comedy by popular, secular companies; (iii) with the loss of the solemn purpose behind the ritual, the original characters evolving into professional types.

The Western scholars are inclined to regard the development in India to have followed the same plan. Keith particularly is at pains to prove that the Indian drama had a ritual origin, and the Vidūṣaka evolved from the Brahmacārin of the Mahāvrata ritual. But the reverence with which religion and ritual are held in India, down to the present day, negates the possibility of its caricature or mockery in any form. A Vedic poet draws an analogy between the ritual and academic functions of the priest, and the activities of the frogs at the beginning of monsoon.[15] But the comparison is solemn and intended to exalt the subject of the hymn, the frogs. It will be a mistake to regard it as a mockery of the priest. Further, a religious celebration in India is a serious affair; it primarily consists of song and dance; and if there is a dramatic show, it is intended to celebrate a particular event in mythology, usually the triumph of a god over the demonaic forces of evil. It will not, therefore, be quite correct to assume that religious ritual affected Indian drama in the same way as it did in the West.

However, this is not to deny the possibility of ritual being one of the shaping influences in the growth of the drama. There is no doubt that ritual contained rudiments of drama. The struggle between the white-coloured Vaiśya and the dark-coloured Śūdra in the Mahāvrata ceremony cannot be imagined without a mimic representation. And this is equally true of the dialogue between the Brahmacārin and the wanton girl in the same ritual; or the haggling and the quarrel with the Soma seller in the Soma sacrifice. But there is no evidence for suggesting, and it is not possible to imagine, that such ritual was ever burlesqued. The ancient ritual appears to have supplied only the inspiration, if at all, to model certain situations in the

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[15] *Ṛgveda*, VII. 103. (vv. 1, 5, 7, 8, 9.)

drama when the playwrights came to compose them. Thus, for example, the dialogue between the Brahmacārin and the wanton girl would present, to the secular eye, an essential element of incongruity; and it is this consciousness of incongruity rather than the ritual itself, that may have led Aśvaghoṣa to invent a situation between a Brahmin and a Gaṇikā. Similarly, the beating of the Soma seller presents a comic possibility; and it is this sense of the comic that may have inspired Kālidāsa to subject the Vidūṣaka in *Śākuntala* to rough-handling by the palace-maids and by the charioteer of Indra. Again, the drunkenness of Indra, or rather his exaltation over the Soma drink, may have helped to affect the character of a drunk on the stage.

But religion is a tremendous force in India. And if a mimicry of ritual adapted to dramatic form is uncertain, the influence of religion and religious mythology in shaping and evolving the Indian drama is not a matter of doubt. The names of the earliest plays which Bharata has given, and those which Patañjali refers to, clearly indicate that the first phase of the development was the mythological drama. It is significant to remember that the vernacular drama of our times has invariably been, in its earliest phases, an adaptation of mythological themes. Bharata's account of the divine origin of the drama, therefore, must naturally be interpreted to mean that religion and mythology adapted to dramatic presentation brought the birth of drama and started its evolution.

The original divine plays presumably were produced and directed by Bharata; the 'sons of Bharata' and the nymphs acted various parts; and the audience naturally was formed by the denizens of the heaven. It is not only the *Nāṭyaśāstra* from which we gather this information; Kālidāsa, too, refers to the performance of the *Lakṣmīsvayaṁvara* which was produced by Bharata and in which Urvaśī was playing the part of the heroine. This should naturally indicate to us the simple idea that the drama was religious and mythological in the beginning.

The first occasion, according to Bharata, on which the drama of the divine origin was presented to the audience on the earth was the Indramaha festival.[16] The later prescription also indicates that though dramatic performances were held to celebrate certain secular events,[17] that most important occasion was invariably some religious festival. Indramaha itself is a festival celebrated at the close of the rainy season and the beginning of winter; and the Sanskrit dramas furnish direct evidence of dramatic productions at Autumn or Spring festival, and on the occasions of a festival in honour of a local deity.

The influence of religion is, thus, evident in determining not only the plot of the drama but the occasion also of its presentation. But the themes of the earliest dramas, as we gather from the references of Patañjali and Bharata, were an eulogy of god for His exploits, a grateful reproduction of His victory over the forces of evil. The same spirit of thanksgiving, it must be remembered, is discernible in the choice of the occasion for dramatic production; for in this latter case, though the drama presented may not have an actual connection with the particular deity of the festival, the preliminaries must have been taken up in the worship of the same.

A further fact that must be recalled is that the festive celebration in India is usually marked by religious worship and song and dance, as can be understood from the description of the Spring festival in the *Ratnāvalī* of Harṣa, *Mālatīmādhava* of Bhavabhūti, and in other literary works. And if there were any excesses, they were due to the festive spirit of hilarity; it was purely secular and unconnected with any caricature of religion or of a religious idea.

The comic element in the drama at this stage must have therefore been external, that is to say, supplied by the comic

[16] NS. GOS, KSS, I. 54-55; KM, I. 20-21.

[17] NS. GOS, IV. 265; KSS, IV. 262; KM, IV. 247–248. See Ghosh, Engl. Tr. IV. 269; also, Introduction, pp. LV–LVI.

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actor Vidūṣaka in the preliminaries; if it was in the play itself it must have been in the representation of evil characters.

The next stage of development is probably marked by a type of drama in which a god continued to be the hero, but was associated with a humorous companion. Bharata specifies four types of Vidūṣakas corresponding to the four types of heroes who were a god, a king, a minister and a Brahmin. I do not think that this classification is fanciful or without purpose. Though there is no specimen available of an early play where a god and his companion Vidūṣaka figure, Bharata could not have given this prescription unless such a play was known to have existed in ancient days. It is presumable that this Vidūṣaka was a humorous character but only in a general sense. The qualification which Bharata prescribes for this type of Vidūṣaka,[18] especially such qualities as wisdom, the ability to patch up quarrels by peaceful mediation, are to be found in a character like Nārada. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself tells us how the gods disapproved of a particular musical item in the preliminaries of the drama because it was especially delightful to the demons and were, on that account, inclined to wipe out the dramatic presentation; and how Nārada intervened to pacify the gods and adjusted the item to the satisfaction of all concerned.[19] The contribution of Nārada[20] and his well-known musical abilities must have easily given him an important place in organising dramatic production. Further, if Nārada had the wisdom and skill to settle disputes, it is not difficult to understand how this ability could be employed in starting innocent quarrels for the sheer fun of it—a role which is consistently allotted to Nārada in the Purāṇic literature. And when we add to this the standing tuft of hair on the crown of the head with which Nārada is

[18] For details, see under the heading, QUALIFICATIONS.

[19] NS. GOS, V. 37-40; KM, KSS, V. 38-41; Ghosh, V. 44-49.

[20] NS. KSS. XXXVI. 66.

peculiarly endowed, we have a physical detail, too, to make Nārada a humorous figure.

It is presumable that the drama at this stage was mythological in character and outlook. But the theme, instead of being a symbolical representation of godly exploits, could center round personal or domestic situations in the lives of gods,[21] where a humorous companion to the godly hero could legitimately be accommodated; such a role would be free from actual caricature or parody of typical personages; but it would provide enough laughter by interesting situations and detached comments; and a dramatic character like that of Nārada would appear to be admirably suited to play such a role.

The further development appears to have been characterized by what may be termed as the *secularization* of the drama; and by this term I mean not only the secular character of the people who presented the drama, but the secular themes also on which the dramas were composed.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* contains an account of the descent of the drama from the divine to the earthly level.[22] In the thirty-sixth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, there is an account of the curse that fell on the 'sons of Bharata': Excessively proud of the knowledge of the *Nāṭyaveda* that they possessed, the 'sons of Bharata' started giving performances based on laughter-provoking themes in which they held to ridicule all kinds of people; thus, they presented in an assembly a composition in which the sages were parodied; and rustic actions based on bad conduct not approved in cultured society were presented. This naturally angered the sages and they cursed the actors, who were Brahmins, that they would be degraded to the position of Śūdras. The actors realised their folly; an attempt was made through

[21] Cf. in this connection the reference to the play, *Lakṣmīsvayaṃvara*; *Vikramorvaśīya*, II. 18, and III, interlude.

[22] NS. KSS, XXXVI.

the gods to pacify the sages; and, as the gods were anxious that the dramatic art created by Brahmā should not perish, the actors were advised to atone for their foolish behaviour.[23]

Later we learn that a king Nahuṣa who possessed the religious merit to reach the kingdom of gods, had the opportunity to witness a musical and dramatic performance in the home of the gods; he was anxious to establish the art on the earth; he approached and besought the Creator to grant him his wish; the Creator conceded the request and instructed the 'sons of Bharata' to go down to the earth to perform the drama; and, on a proper performance being given, promised to mitigate the curse and make the actors undespised in the eyes of Brahmins and the kings.[24] And it was thus, on account of the curse, and partly due to the desire of king Nahuṣa, that the dramatic art came to earth.

This account may be fanciful; and yet it conceals a social history the significance of which may not be missed. Bharata was a sage and his sons were naturally regarded as Brahmins; but they were degraded to the position of Śūdras on account of the curse, and were committed to give performances on the earth. This should mean for us that the art of drama was in the hands of secular actors, some of whom at least must have been drawn from the comparatively lower strata of society. The epic and the poetic literatures bear testimony to the low estimation in which the *Śailūṣas*, meaning actors, were held as a social class; Bāṇa tells us in his *Harṣacarita* how he suffered social disapprobation on account of his association with professional actors and how he had to vindicate his position before the emperor Harṣa. The history of the dramatic companies in all the provinces of India in modern times reveals the same social stigma being attached to the professional actors.

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[23] NS. KSS, XXXVI. 29-47; KM, XXXVI. 29-45.

[24] NS. KSS, XXXVI. 41-70. KM has only 45 verses to this chapter, and so, does not contain the legend of Nahuṣa.

It is, of course, to be expected that a keen artistic urge and love of the art must have led to defy the social ban even in ancient days as in our own. Hence, the kings not only patronized the actors but also attended to the education of young princesses and palace-maids in the arts of singing, dance and histrionics. Some of the kings were themselves fine artists. And, judging by the evidence of *Mālavikāgnimitra*, reputed Brahmins took up the profession of a Nāṭyācārya.

But if the dramatic art came into the hands of the secular actors who were low in the social scale, occasional lapses on their part, and descending to the level of rustic farce, could in their case be naturally understood. Perhaps a natural desire to produce laughter and amuse the spectators must have been there; and it could also account for the farcical representation by the actors. Any of these factors, or probably both, were responsible for bringing an element of caricature and laughter into dramatic representation; and this is what the action of the 'sons of Bharata' described above signifies for us.

Thus, it is a popular element, drawn chiefly perhaps from the rustic level, that seems to have provided amusement in dramatic representation. And it is on this popular and secular level that caricature or mimic presentation intended for laughter can be understood. In other words, it is not a parody of religious ritual but the mimicry of ritual in its social context that must be regarded as a shaping influence, particularly in India.

It was seen how in the 'Feast of fools', the 'bishop' was substituted in the second tradition by a popular 'king' or 'prince'. It is important to note that the inversion of status which is so characteristic of the 'Feast of Fools' is equally characteristic of Folk-festivals.[25] The mock king mentioned by Dr. Frazer in this connection is one of the meanest of the people, chosen out to represent the real king as the priest-victim of a divine service. Sir Walter Elliot has given an account of the

[25] Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. I, p. 326.

'Indian Village Feast' of the K o n d s or K u i n g a s, and he assures us that he found " this remarkable institution existing in every part of India," with varying details but the main features remaining the same.[26] This village feast of the *Konds* " is a fertility ritual in which a buffalo is killed. It is shared by all and the piece of her flesh is sown in the field to make it fertile. Even Brahmins take part in it and scramble for the piece of flesh." The feast is in honour of the village goddess, *grāmadevatā*. " Here the officiating priests are the Parias who on this occasion alone are exempt from the degrading condition which excludes them from the village. With them are included the Mangs, Paria dancing girls, the musician in attendance on them called Rangia who acts also as a sort of jester or buffoon."[27] The mock-king, the jester and the popular festive element present in this ritual are all an indication, if at all, of the contribution of the popular ritual to the development of drama on the comic side.

The drama was undoubtedly intended to represent the conduct and life of the entire world consisting of gods, demi-gods and humans. But it is understandable that the drama must have passed through a phase of development before the human hero was regarded as a fit subject for dramatic representation. However, the transition was natural and inevitable. And if the story of the curse is suggestive, the passing of the drama from the divine to the earthly level should suggest the tendency towards secular themes and a human hero.

The part played by king Nahuṣa in bringing the drama to earth also appears to be suggestive. Though song, dance and dramatic representations were loved by all people,—and they have been always so loved—the dramatic art must have received

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[26] Sir Walter Elliot, *On the Characteristics of the Population of Central India*; JESL, N. S. i. 94 (1869); quoted by Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. II, Appendix i, pp. 266-67ff.

[27] Ibid.

a definite encouragement by the royal patronage, which is what the story of Nahuṣa suggests. The patronage of kings in ancient India to this art not only enabled it to thrive and prosper, but it must also have influenced the shape that the drama gradually took. A preference for secular themes coupled with royal patronage gradually brought into existence the court drama with king as the inevitable hero of the composition. And when the court drama assumed the form of comedy, the court-jester, who in real life was a companion of the king, stepped naturally into the drama as the Vidūṣaka attached to the royal hero. It is necessary to state that this is not merely an inference drawn from the story contained in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The available specimens of Sanskrit drama sufficiently warrant the conclusion that the drama took on the form of court-life comedy and that the form came to stay.

It is significant that the Vidūṣaka appears only in such dramas as are set in social atmosphere, the hero being a king or a Brahmin youth. Even when the hero is drawn either from mythology or legend, the contemporary social setting appears to have been regarded as the most essential element for the particular pattern of court comedy. Hence, in the treatment of epic themes drawn from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, the Vidūṣaka is omitted; the exceptions are *Ratimanmatha* and *Adbhutadarpaṇa*, the plays which belong to the first quarter of the 17th Cent. A.D. The familiar and historical character of the epic story prevents a dramatist from treating it naturally in contemporary social setting; and hence, there is no scope for the Vidūṣaka. Another pattern is the full-fledged social drama known as *Prakaraṇa*. Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika* is the type. And if Bhavabhūti has omitted the Vidūṣaka in his *Prakaraṇa* drama, he has substituted a *Pīṭhamarda* as a companion of the hero.

It has been already seen that Vidūṣaka was a popular figure. It was customary for kings to maintain a court-jester. It is also possible to say that professional fools were fashionable in

ancient India. The *Kāmasūtra*[28] mentions the Vidūṣaka as an attendant of the fashionable Gentleman. He enjoyed the confidence of both the gentlemen and their mistresses; and men of his type were employed as advisers in amorous *liaison* by gentlemen and prostitutes. The humorous companion of the royal hero and of the wealthy, cultured merchant prince, or minister, was thus a social, popular figure, which the dramatists could easily pick up for their compositions.

As a matter of fact, when the dramatists came to compose their comedies the social material was already there for them to be lifted from actual life. If drama is a picture of life, the writers must naturally know it as thoroughly as possible; and Sanskrit theorists, in fact, prescribe close study of life in the world as one of the essential factors in the training of poets.[29] Life in the royal court and palace, in fashionable circles and in towns and villages, at public and village festivals,[30] was there for the poets to observe, and afforded potentialities for dramatic construction. It was not really necessary for the poets to go to any special source to be able to compose situations involving the amorous adventures of kings, the love-intrigues, the palace-maids, the courtesans, the gay life at drinking parties and in gambling halls, or the hilarity and song and dance which characterise public festivals. For, the scenes from the royal

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[28] (i) भोजनानन्तरं...पीठमर्दविटविदूषकायत्ता व्यापाराः । Kā. Sū., KSS. (No. 29), I. iv. 21.

(ii) एकदेशविद्यस्तु क्रीडनको विश्वास्यश्च विदूषको वैहासिको वा । I. iv. 46. The Comm. has, 'वेशे गोष्ठ्यां च विश्वास्यतामुपगम्य परिहासशीलवृत्त्या वर्तत इत्यर्थः, स च वेश्यां नागरकं वा कञ्चित् प्रमाथन्तं लब्धप्रणयत्वादपवदत इति विदूषकः, क्रीडनत्वाच्च वेशे गोष्ठ्यां च विविधेन हासेन चरति इति वैहासिकः, इत्युभयनामा ।

(iii) एते वेश्यानां नागरकाणां च मन्त्रिणः सन्धिविग्रहनियुक्ताः । I. iv. 47.
—Kā Sū. IV. English Tr.. Basu and Ghosh, pp. 40–41.

[29] Cf. Mammaṭa, *Kāvyaprakāśa*, I. 3: 'शक्तिर्निपुणता लोकशास्त्रकाव्याद्यवेक्षणात् । काव्यज्ञशिक्षयाऽभ्यास इति हेतुस्तदुद्भवे ॥

The Vṛtti on *loka* reads: लोकस्य स्थावरजङ्गमात्मकलोकवृत्तस्य ।

[30] Kā. Sū. Ch. IV, entitled 'Nāgaraka'; op. cit.

harem where the Vidūṣaka and the palace-maids were thrown together, and even the situation between the courtesan and either the Vidūṣaka or Viṭa, were factors of fashionable social life, as can be gathered from the evidence of the *Kāmasūtra* and the picture of contemporary life painted in a drama like the *Mṛcchakaṭika.*

It is not possible to say whether the professional jester belonged to any particular caste. It was probably not necessary to insist on this distinction in actual life, so long as the person possessed the neoessary ability and qualities to fulfil his function in a social context. But when the dramatists developed this figure in their compositions, it was, I think, but natural that they should have observed certain rules of propriety, both of social behaviour and of artistic composition. We cannot afford to ignore in this connection two important factors: first, that drama is a form of public entertainment and the audience will consist, as always, of both the common folk as well as the elite in a society; and second, since the prevailing form of comedy was largely based on royal life and since the king was the chief patron of this art, literary and social propriety demanded that the humorous companion of the royal hero should conventionally belong to a caste worthy of the royal rank. I suppose that is what the dramatists did; and the prescription of Bharata that the Vidūṣaka attached to the king should be a 'twice-born' can be construed naturally in this light. The story of the curse which Bharata has narrated tells us that when his 'sons' gave a rustic exhibition of jest and ridicule before the sages they succeeded only in angering them. This has, one must suppose, a psychological moral: Even if a jest were true and natural, it matters in public exhibition who makes that jest; the propriety which need not be observed in private social circle becomes a psychological necessity in public and open exhibition. This consideration should enlighten and strengthen the convention that came to be established about the caste of the Vidūṣaka.

It may be repeated that the elements in the composition of

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the Vidūṣaka were to be found in the social life that the dramatists could observe round about them. There were incongruous elements in the lives that the sages and ascetics, Brahmins and kings, led and which could be utilized for humorous purposes. If the 'sons of Bharata' were moved to mock at the sages, the young pupil in Vālmīki's hermitage could not control his laughter over the great sage Vasiṣṭha gobbling up a tawny calf immediately on his arrival; and Bhavabhūti does not hesitate to describe the reaction of the boy in comparing Vasiṣṭha to a tiger or a wolf ![31] Similarly, the 'uneducated' Brahmin who yet claimed the privileges of his caste, was a familiar social figure. Yāska condemns a Brāhmaṇa who is ignorant of the meaning of the Vedic verses.[32] Manu severely criticises the Brahmins who neglect the duties of their caste and are, thus, a shame to their own class[33]. These strictures presuppose the existence of such a class. Hence, it was easy for a Bhāsa to paint the figure of Indra as a disguised *Bhikṣuka*, greedy and demanding, and speaking the vernacular of the uneducated class; [34] or for a Śūdraka to show a Maitreya flaring up into anger when the servant asked him to wash the feet of the master.[35]

The Vidūṣaka in the Sanskrit drama certainly holds to ridicule the incongruities in the life of the Brahmin class. But

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[31] URC., IV, interlude: 'मए उण जाणिदं वग्घो वा विओ वा एसोत्ति। ...जेण परावडिदेण जेव्व सा वराई कविला कल्लाणी मडमडाइदा।'

[32] Yāska, *Nirukta*, I. 18: 'स्थाणुरयं भारहारः किलाभूद्। अधीत्य वेदं न विजानाति योऽर्थम् ॥'

[33] *Manusmṛti*, II, 103, 110 and ff. Also, II. 157–158:

यथा काष्ठमयो हस्ती यथा चर्ममयो मृगः ।
यश्च विप्रोऽनधीयानस्त्रयस्ते नाम बिभ्रति ॥
यथा षण्ढोऽफलः स्त्रीषु यथा गौर्गवि चाफला ।
यथा चाज्ञेऽफलं दानं तथा विप्रोऽनृचोऽफलः ॥

[34] Bhāsa, *Karṇabhāra*.

[35] *Mṛc.*, III. 6.[14–15]. '(सक्रोधम्) भो वअस्स एसो दाणिं दासीए पुत्तो भविअ पाणिअं गेण्हेहि। मं उण बम्हणं पादाइं धोआवेदि।'

to say this is one thing, and to say that the Vidūṣaka is a caricature of the Brahmin class, as some writers on this subject have done, is quite another. The first statement is correct; but the second will put the Vidūṣaka in a narrow and lop-sided perspective and will, therefore, be decidedly wrong. A careful study of the Sanskrit dramas is apt to convince us that the Vidūṣaka, as a privileged jester, moves on the stage poking fun at everything. Palace-maids, courtesans and their retinue are not the only objects thrown in the way of his humorous jibes. Kālidāsa's Vidūṣakas continually cut jokes, openly or covertly, at the cost of the royal hero in love-situations. Duṣyanta's General does not escape a satirical lashing at the hands of Māḍhavya,[36] who is equally critical of the ascetics who grow long hair and beard, and who grease their heads with *Iṅgudī* oil.[37] Bhāsa's Santuṣṭa makes fun of the apparel, or the absence of it, imposed by religion.[38] And the range of Śūdraka's Maitreya is so vast that there is practically nothing that appears to escape his humorous purview. And if humour, like charity, must begin at home, it is but to be expected that the Vidūṣaka should exhibit the humorous side of the caste to which he belongs. It is further a true mark of art that a person who laughs at others should possess the disarming ability to laugh at himself. It is in this sense that the Vidūṣaka includes in himself the caricature of the Brāhmaṇa. If some dramatists, particularly the later ones, have turned the ridicule of the Vidūṣaka only on himself, that is to say, on the Brahmin class, it shows only their lack of dramatic ability and poverty of imagination. But the reader

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[36] *Śāk.*, 'अन्वेहि रे उच्छाहहेतुअ ।... तुमं दाव अडवीदो अडवीं आहिंडतो णरणासिआलोलुवस्स जिण्णरिच्छस्स कस्स वि मुहे पडिस्ससि ।' II. 5.[1–3]; 'गच्छ भो दासीएपुत्त । धंसिदो दे उच्छाहवुत्तंतो ।' II. 7.[2].

[37] *Śāk.*, 'तेण हि लहु परित्ताअदु णं भवं । मा कस्स वि तवस्सिणो इंगुदीतेल्लच्चिक्कणसीसस्स हत्थे पडिस्सदि ।' II. 10.[1–2]; 'जह अहं देक्खामि पूरिदव्वं णेण चित्तफलअं लंबकुच्चाणं तावसाणं कदंबेहिं ।' VI. 17.[1–2].

[38] *Avi.*, 'आम भोदि । जण्णोपवीदेण बह्मणो, चीवरेण रत्तपडो । जदि वत्थं अवणेमि, समणओ होमि ।' V. 5.[24–25].

would be wrong to assume that this is all that the Vidūṣaka represents; and that this was the only development that was possible in the case of this dramatic character. As a matter of fact, the Sanskrit dramas unmistakably show that the Vidūṣaka as only a caricature of the Brahmin was a later phase of development, and after that the Vidūṣaka as a dramatic character practically ceased to grow.

That this Vidūṣaka should speak in Prakrit is only natural.[39] It was the language of everyday speech. That is the reason why not only the common and uneducated people used it; but the cultured people also who knew Sanskrit very well continually made use of it, especially in social intercourse. The author of the *Kāmasūtra* particularly advises the fashionable gentleman against making too much use of the Sanskrit (as also of the vernacular) in social gatherings.[40] It must also be remembered that the Vidūṣaka as a dramatic character was cracking his jokes for providing amusement to the larger audience, and not for eliciting an unwilling smile from the high-brow pundits only. And if there were something incongruous in the Brāhmaṇa speaking in Prakrit, the very incongruity was a device for provoking laughter.

Some of the other traits in the characterization of the Vidūṣaka can be quite naturally understood. As a typical Brahmin, he is both a glutton and a coward. The Brahmins are proverbially fond of food.[41] And Bhavabhūti, who was himself a high Brahmin of the Vedic order, tells us that the heroism of the Brahmins is confined only to the use of their tongue.[42] The physical deformity of the Vidūṣaka, on the

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[39] The question is further examined under the heading, LANGUAGE.

[40] नात्यन्तं संस्कृतेनैव नात्यन्तं देशभाषया ।
कथां गोष्ठीषु कथयँल्लोके बहुमतो भवेत् ॥
Kā. Sū. KSS., I. iv. 50; Kā. Sū. English Tr. op. cit. p. 42.

[41] Cf. 'ब्राह्मणो भोजनप्रियः ।'

[42] URC., V. 32 *a*: सिद्धं ह्येतद् वाचि वीर्यं द्विजानाम् ।

contrary, is artificial; it is a stage trick to provoke laughter; or better perhaps, it can be traced to the hideousness of the Asura type, or the unusual tuft of hair of Nārada. Many of these traits were convenient and handy for evoking fun. A repeated use of them must have settled the outline of this character and turned him into a conventional figure of the stage.

To sum up: The development of the Vidūṣaka, thus, seems to have occurred on the following lines:

(1) The evidence of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the Sanskrit literature shows that the earliest phase of the drama was marked by the Deva-Asura conflict, where the representation of Asura as a comic character provided the only possibility for humour.

(2) The influence of religion on dramatic development must be acknowledged to be tremendous, especially in India. But it is inconceivable that it provided occasions for parody or caricature. On the contrary, it is in supplying the themes, in determining the occasions of dramatic performances, and in shaping the preliminaries of the drama (known as *Pūrvaraṅga*), which continued more or less even after the drama had outgrown the mythological stage, that the potent influence of religion and religious ritual must be discerned.

When the drama, therefore, entered the second stage of development, and when the domestic life of a god, rather than his symbolic victories, provided the theme of a drama, the source of amusement was perhaps a Brahmin sage full of wisdom and ability, but possessing a spirit of mirth and loving fun for its own sake. This is the first type of Vidūṣaka that Bharata associates with the god-hero. And it is possible to look upon Nārada as a pioneer character that launched the Vidūṣaka on his dramatic career.

(3) The next development probably came when the drama left the precincts of mythology and entered into the broad

fields of social life. The actors were probably drawn from the common ranks, and were naturally prone to evoke mirth. The royal patronage, however, gave a great filip to this art. This influence proved to be another very potent factor in shaping the drama as a court comedy centering round the private and social life of a king.

Here, there were several factors that could mould the typical dramatic characters. The court-jester and the professional fool were in existence. The social life bubbled with mirth and amusement and contained all the potentialities for constructing interesting situations. The social life at gatherings and festivals showed up not only the spirit of gaeity but also interesting character-types. The dramatist had only to pick the elements up to be woven into dramatic compositions. And the actors were ready to amuse and entertain the public. Thus, the popular ritual and festivals, the general social life and the contemporary social types shaped the comedy and the comic figures. The influence of royal courts, however, must have been a great single factor in moulding the type of the Vidūṣaka which is generally familiar from the Sanskrit dramas, and which Bharata mentions as the second and the third type.

(4) The first Vidūṣaka was in all probability a Brahmin sage only, embodying the traditional knowledge and wisdom, which are some basic requirements for humour. That the Vidūṣaka in the prevailing type of court comedy came to be conventionally treated as a Brahmin, must have been due very largely to the demand of social and artistic propriety. In a drama which is a public entertainment the companion of the hero was expected to be worthy of his social rank; and if he were to poke fun at everybody, including himself, it were proper that he belonged to the highest class; so that he could provide fun without hurting anybody's feelings.

(5) And once the Vidūṣaka came to typify the Brahmin class, some of the familiar traits could be easily attached to him

as popular devices for evoking laughter, as other traits, like ignorance of the Śāstras and ugliness of figure, could be tacked on, or taken off, according to convenience.

When some of these traits were stratified by repeated use, the Vidūṣaka become a conventional figure and a stock character of Sanskrit drama.

III

PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND ACCESSORIES

Bharata's description of the appearance of the Vidūṣaka shows him to be a Dvija who is dwarfish, having protruding teeth, a hunch-back, lame, with bald head and red eyes; his face is deformed; in short, the Vidūṣaka is ugly and deformed in appearance.[1]

Later theorists do not mention anything about the appearance of the Vidūṣaka except Śāradātanaya who repeats Bharata's adjectives, that the Vidūṣaka is bald-headed, red-eyed, possessed of a funny sort of back-bone (that is, 'hunch-back') and adds that his hair is tawny and he has a beard that is either yellow or green in colour.[2]

There is an apparent contradiction between the 'bald-headed'ness and 'tawny hair' mentioned by Śāradātanaya. But this contradiction appears in Bharata's description also: Having

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[1] Cf. वामनो दन्तुरः कुब्जो द्विजन्मा विकृताननः ।
खलतिः पिङ्गलाक्षश्च स विधेयो विदूषकः ॥
NS. KM, XXIV. 106; KSS, XXXV. 57 (v. l. 'द्विजिह्वो').

[2] Cf. खलतिः पिङ्गलाक्षश्च हास्यानूकविभूषितः ।
पिङ्गकेशो हरिश्मश्रुर्नर्तकश्च विदूषकः ॥
BP. GOS. No. 45; p. 289.

Prof. J. T. Parikh is wrong in saying that "हास्यानूक stands for some laughable degradation probably on the face of the Vidūṣaka." *The Vidūṣaka: Theory and Practice*, p. 23, footnote 1. 'अनूक' means 'backbone'; cf. 'वंशस्याधारः आयतिः पृष्ठास्थिविशेषः ।' 'सद्रं चानूकं च गृहपतेः ।' Ait. Br., where Sāyaṇa remarks, 'अनूकं मूत्रबस्तिः स्यात् सास्नेत्येके वदन्ति च ।' quoted in Apte's Sans. Dict.

'हास्यानूक' thus means 'funny backbone', and ultimately signifies a 'hunchback'.



" VIDŪṢAKA ON THE KERALA STAGE "

(See Ch. III p. 49)

Courtesy-His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin.

mentioned that the Vidūṣaka is bald-headed, Bharata says in another place, while describing the head-dress, that the Vidūṣaka should have a bald head and/or hair resembling a crow's feet.[3] '*Kākapada*' is like the sign (∧); Abhinava[4] explains that the hair on the head are to be shaved so as to look like a crow's feet. This would mean that the hair would be completely shaved off on the top of the head and only two side-locks would be kept. If this is what is meant, the prescription for baldness and side-hair would not be exactly conflicting. The Vidūṣaka is bald on the top of the head and has two side-locks which resemble a crow's feet, and which are possibly of a tawny colour. There is, however, an alternative reading,[5] which provides clearly an option between baldness and side-locks.

Another detail in the make-up of the Vidūṣaka seems to be provided by the phrase '*cheda-vibhūṣitavadano*'[6]: '*Cheda*' literally means 'a cut'; here it refers to the *stripes of colour* put on the face.[7] There is an alternative reading to this

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[3] Cf. विदूषकस्य कर्तव्यं खल्लिकाकपदं तथा ॥
NS. KSS, XXIII. 148; identical with KM, XXI. 126; GOS. XXI. 155, with alternative reading.

[4] Cf. NS. GOS. XXI. 155, Comm. p. 134:
काकपक्षवद् यत्र केशविच्छेदः ।

[5] Cf. विदूषकस्य खलतिः स्याद् काकपदमेव वा ।
This is the reading in NS. GOS. XXI. 155 b.

[6] NS. KM, XXXV. 25 b: छेदविभूषितवदनो विदूषको नाम विज्ञेयः ॥ KSS, XXXV. 71 (v. l. विभूषितवचनो).

J. T. Parikh writes, "Cheda may mean either an incision or a distinguishing mark on the face of the Vidūṣaka". op. cit. p. 23. This is not correct; see the following note.

[7] Cf. *Meghadūta*, Pūrvamegha, v. 19 cd:
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य ।

In Kerala Nāṭya I saw red and white alternate stripes of colour put on the face, running from the corners of the eyes near the nasal bridge, down or across the cheeks, in the make-up of the Vidūṣaka.

phrase,[8] which only means that the Vidūṣaka's speech is 'decorated'; that is, distinctly humorous. But in another context, while explaining the laughter arising out of the dress, Bharata says that the Vidūṣaka is painted with black soot, ashes, brown soft stone etc.[9] It appears, therefore, that the colours made out of these substances were used in an appropriate manner on the face in the make-up of the Vidūṣaka.

The Sanskrit dramatists tacitly assume the peculiar appearance of the Vidūṣaka and do not bother to mention it in their texts. And when they do so, they refer not always to the attributes given by the theorists, but to the general appearance of the Vidūṣaka only.

Thus, Kālidāsa mentions the top-lock of hair for Māḍhavya.[10] So does Rājaśekhara; and the name of his Vidūṣaka, Kapiñjala, is apt to suggest tawny hair; this Vidūṣaka has besides a long beard.[11] On the other hand, Rājaśekhara's Cārāyaṇa is represented as bald-headed.[12]

Bhāsa does not mention the Vidūṣaka's ugliness; but one of his Vidūṣakas, Santuṣṭa feigns that he is not a man; that, in fact, he is a woman;[13] and the suggestion probably is of a

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[8] NS. KSS, XXXV. 71: 'विभूषितवचनो'.

[9] Cf. 'चीरचर्ममषीभस्मगैरिकाद्यैस्तु मण्डितः।'
NS. GOS. XII. 141 b; KSS, XII. 140 a; not found in KM, 1894 ed.

Ghosh translates, "...smeared with ink (or lamp-black), ashes, or yellow ochre..." op. cit. XIII. 141-142; p. 227.

[10] Śāk., act V: सिहण्डके ताडीअमाणस्स...णत्थि दाणिं मे मोक्खो।

[11] Cf. Karpūra., I 20.[40]: 'लम्बकुच्चं'. See Note (35) below.

Ibid. IV. 1.[4]: ता किं ण क्खु दे मुळुप्पाडिअचूलिआसीसं (v. l. चूलिआविअलं सीसं) करिस्से।

[12] Cf. Viddha., IV. 3.[1]:
'अम्हारिसखल्लाडस्स फुल्लिआउप्पाडओ धम्मो वड्ढदि।'

[13] Avi., act V, 5.[11-12]: को अण्णो जणो मं पेक्खिअ पुरिसो त्ति भणादि। इत्थिआ खु अहं।

defective personality. Mahodara in *Adbhutadarpaṇa* resents the implication that he has defective manhood.[14] Śūdraka's Maitreya has a head which resembles a camel's knee, or looks like a crow's feet.[15] Kālidāsa shows two of his Vidūṣakas to be having a monkey-like appearance.[16] Harṣa compares the voice of one Vidūṣaka to that of a wicked monkey and suggests his ridiculous appearance.[17] Ātreya is addressed as a 'brown monkey' by the drunken Viṭa.[18] Vaikhānasa is described as monkey-like in appearance; and has the voice of an ass.[19] Rājaśekhara follows the rule in representing Cārāyaṇa as bald-headed; this Vidūṣaka also resembles a monkey; but whereas Kālidāsa's Vidūṣakas admit their monkey-like appearance openly and unashamedly, Cārāyaṇa flares up in anger at the King's suggestion of his appearance, and refuses to pay attention

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[14] Cf. Adbhuta., V, (p. 48): कहं दे अहं ण पुरिसो। पडिसंवच्छरं पसूदा मह बम्हरक्खसी कुण्डोदरी एव्व जाणाइ मे पुरिसत्तणं।

[15] Mṛc., act I, 56.[6–7]: अहं पि इमिणा **करहजाणुसरिसेण सीसेण** दुवेवि तुम्हे पसादेमि।

Śakāra addresses the Vidūṣaka at I. 50.[4–5] as, 'अले **काकपद-शीशमश्तका** दुट्ठबडुआ...'

[16] The Vidūṣakas in Mālavikā. and Vik. Cf.

(i) साहु रे **पिङ्गलवाणर**। साहु परित्तादो तुए संकटादो **सपक्खो**। (Mālavikā., IV. 17.[23–24]); (ii) एसो **आलिहिदो वाणरो** विअ किंपि तुण्हिभूदो अज्जमाणवओ चिट्ठदि। Vik. II. [15–16]; किंति संकिस्सदि। णं अरसमवासपरिचिदो एव्व **साहामिओ**। Vik. V. 11.[5–6].

[17] Ratnā., act II. 3.[14–19]. Read:

सागरिका—सुसंगदे जाणीअदि पुणो वि सो दुट्ठवाणरो आगच्छदित्ति।

सुसंगता—(विदूषकं दृष्ट्वा विहस्य) अइ काअरे, मा भेहि। भत्तुणो पासवत्ती अज्जवसंतओ क्खु एसो।

सागरिका—सहि सुसंगदे दंसणीओ क्खु अअं जणो।

[18] Nāgā., act III. 3.[17–18]: 'अरे कविलमक्कडअ...'

[19] Cf. Kaumudī., II, Nipuṇikā's remark (p. 33): 'आकिदीए मक्कडो वाचाए गद्दभो।'

to the king's talk.[20] Kapiñjala wears tawny hair, a long beard, and has basket-like ears.[21] In the case of Māḍhavya, Kālidāsa suggests the funny appearance of the Vidūṣaka by his short stature, the posture of physical breakdown and paralysis that he assumes, suggestive of a hunch-backed dwarf; and by putting him in a situation where he is beaten and his pigtail is pulled by mischievous maids; or where he is pounded and his body twisted in three places by the charioteer of Indra.[22] Harṣa has a scene in which the Vidūṣaka's face is blackened by a maid.[23] Mahādeva shows the Vidūṣaka to be pot-bellied: The name of the Vidūṣaka, Mahodara, and the manner in which he makes his first appearance on the stage, holding his belly with both the hands,[24] are an indication of his funny appearance.

An ugly appearance calculated to evoke laughter appears, thus, to be a noted characteristic of the Vidūṣaka. It is presumable that the details given above refer to the appearance of the Vidūṣaka *on the stage* and are, therefore, a part of the make-up of this conventional character.

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[20] Cf. Viddha., act I. 32.[21–25,29]:
विदूषकः—...एसो उण मन्दुरामक्कडो टप्परकण्णो णाम ।
राजा—सखे त्वमेवोऽभिलिखितः ।
विदूषकः—(सक्रोधम्) णाहं लिहिदुं जाणिदो । बम्हणी जाणादि जादिसो हं । सा मं
भणादि तुमं पञ्चकावो देवो त्ति ।
...को दुज्जणवअणाणं कण्णं देदि ।

[21] See note (11) above. cf. 'लम्बकुच्चं...टप्परकण्णं...'.

[22] Śāk., acts V and VI. The Vidūṣaka is referred to as 'माणवक' (VI. 5.[18]); his remarks, 'अंगभंगविअलो विअ भविअ चिट्ठिस्सं ।' (II.[15]) and 'जं वेदसो खुज्जलीलं विडम्बेदि..।' (II 2.[8–9]), suggest his appearance.

The ref. to situations are: 'भो वअस्स, गहीदस्स ताए परकीएहिं हत्थेहिं सिहण्डए ताडीअमाणस्स अच्छराए वीदरागस्स विअ णत्थि दाणिं मे मोक्खो ।' (V. 1.[7–9]); and 'एस मं को वि पच्चवणदसिरोहरं इक्खुं विअ तिण्णभंगं करेदि ।' (VI. 26.[3–4]).

[23] Nāgā. act III.

[24] Adbhuta., act V. The stage-direction reads:
बाहुभ्यां उदरं परिगृह्य परिक्रामति ।

The appearance of the Vidūṣaka could have been a legacy from the earliest Asura type, as previously suggested. But it is possible that Bharata provided several attributes, to which a little addition was made afterwards, mainly with the intention of guiding the actor in preparing his make-up. It cannot be imagined that each and every detail in the prescription was intended to be strictly followed. The underlying idea in the appearance of the Vidūṣaka seems to be of a physical deformity only, which Bharata suggested by means of several attributes. It must have been naturally left to the actor (or the dramatist) to emphasise one or more of these attributes in the actual dramatic performance. After all, *some* incongruity in physical appearance would certainly be a source of laughter on the stage.

Bharata enjoins particular head-dresses (*pratiśira*, *pratiśīrṣa*) for the dramatic characters.[25] Abhinava[26] thinks that the crown, head-dress etc. help the audience in fixing the identity of a character: The king, minister, merchant and priest, each will have a particular type of head-dress; and the audience will be able to know thereby what character exactly is performing on the stage. In this connection Bharata prescribes three locks of hair or a completely shaven head for the Ceṭa; and for the Vidūṣaka, '*khallikākapada*'[27]. This, as already suggested, means a bald pate and two side-locks. Bharata does not provide any head-dress for the Vidūṣaka; and Abhinava explicitly says that *kākapada* means the cutting of the hair in the manner of a crow's feet.

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[25] Cf. तथा प्रतिशिरश्चापि कर्तव्यं नाटकाश्रयम् ।
NS. GOS. XXI. 139; KM, XXI. 115; KSS, XXIII. 132.

[26] Cf. मुकुटप्रतिशीर्षकादिना तावन्नटबुद्धिराच्छाद्यते ।
NS. GOS, Vol. I, Comm. p. 287 (first ed.); (second ed. p. 285).

[27] Cf. चेटानामपि कर्तव्यं त्रिशिखं मुण्डमेव वा ।
विदूषकस्य कर्तव्यं खल्लिकाकपदं तथा ॥
NS. GOS, XXI. 155; KM, XXI. 126; KSS, XXIII. 148.

The figure of the Vidūṣaka appears on a terracotta plaque of the Gupta period, wearing a three-cornered cap known by the name of *triśikhaṇḍaka*.[28] The word is identical in meaning with Bharata's *triśikha*. But since the interpretation of the phrase according to Bharata and Abhinava appears to refer to the arrangement of hair, the use of a cap for the Vidūṣaka must be taken as a contribution of dramatic practice prevalent on the Sanskrit stage in this particular period.

The *Paumacariya* of Vimala (4th cent. A.D.) has a verse (I. 19) which utilizes the simile of 'wooden ears' of the Vidūṣaka.[29] It is, therefore, suggested that the Vidūṣaka wore a kind of a mask with wooden ears. The *Padmacarita* of Raviṣeṇa (676 A.D.) does not, however, contain the word for 'wooden' in its Sanskrit rendering.[30] It is, hence, presumed that the

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[28] Cf. Terracotta plaque, Mathura Museum, No. 2795.

Dr. V. S. Agrawala's note to this Illustration is as follows: 'This plaque represents a scene showing a woman pulling a scarf drawn round the neck of a male figure who on the basis of his quaint cap may be identified as a jester (Vidūṣaka). It was one of the palace amusements (अन्तःपुरिकाविनोद) in which the inmates of the harem took part together with such male attendants as the jester, old chamberlain (वृद्धकञ्चुकी) and the dwarfs etc. A reference to this pastime is found in Bāṇa's Kādambarī in the description of the palace festivities at the time of the birth of prince Chandrāpīḍa. The panel has been fully described by me in a paper entitled 'A palace amusement scene on a terracotta panel from Mathura', (Journal of the India Society of Oriental Art, 1942, Vol. X, pp. 69-73'.) *Gupta Art*, List of Illustrations, Fig. 10, Note, pp. 36-37.

I am grateful to Dr. Agrawala for supplying me the details.

[29] *Paumacariyam*, I. 19:

ते नाम होन्ति कण्णा जे जिणवरसासणम्मि सुइपुण्णा ।
अन्ने विदूसगस्स व दारुमया चेव निम्मविया ॥

[30] *Padmacarita*, I. 28:

सत्कथाश्रवणौ यौ च श्रवणौ तौ मतौ मम ।
अन्यौ विदूषकस्येव श्रवणाकारधारिणौ ॥



" TRIS'IKHAṆḌAKA VIDŪṢAKA "

(See Ch. III p. 54)

From–Terracotta Panel, Mathura Museum, No. 2795.

practice fell out of use by this time.[31]

There is a possibility that the word '*dārumayā*' in the original Prakrit is used only metaphorically; and hence, the Sanskrit prototype of Raviṣeṇa brings out the idea of 'wooden' merely by, 'having the outward shape of ears'. The suggestion is that of the absence of *Śruta* or knowledge; and, thus, indicates the alleged lack of Vedic learning on the part of the Vidūṣaka.

The evidence from *Karpūramañjarī* has been interpreted to indicate the use of masks by dramatic characters.[32] The Sūtradhāra mentions an assistant actress fixing the masks for the characters.[33] The Vidūṣaka describes some maidens as wearing masks of night-wandering ogresses and as enacting a cemetery dance.[34] The Vidūṣaka seems to refer to his own characteristic mask as consisting of 'a long beard and aweful ears'.[35]

The word in the above context is *paḍisīsaa*, Sanskrit, *pratiśīrṣaka* or *pratiśira*. Bharata sanctions their use.[36] But the exact sense in which he takes the word *pratiśīrṣaka* or *pratiśira* appears to be doubtful. In some places it probably means only a 'head-dress': According to one rule the highest characters among the celestials are to be provided with diadems (*kirīṭinaḥ*); the middling will appear with covered heads (*maulinaḥ*);

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[31] Dr. A. N. Upadhye, IHQ. Vol. VIII, No. 4,: Dec. 1932; p. 783.

[32] See, Karpūra., edited by Konow and Lanman, HOS., Vol. IV, 1901.

[33] Karpūra., I. 4.[5]: अण्णा पडिसीसआइं पडिसारेदि।

[34] Ibid. IV. 15 (KM, 14):
हत्थे महामंसबलीधराओ हुंकारफेक्काररवा रउद्दा।
णिसाअरीणं पडिसीसएहिं अण्णा मसाणाहिणअं कुणन्ति॥

[35] Ibid. I. 20.[40]: एसा वा दुट्ठदासी लम्बकुच्चं टप्परकण्णं पडिसीसअं दइअ मह ठाणे करीअदु।

The KM. edition has 'लम्बकुच्चा' and 'टप्परकण्णी' which are adjectives to दासी, and not to पडिसीसअ.

[36] NS. GOS. XXI. 139; KM, XXI. 115; KSS, XXIII. 132. See note (25) above. Read: तथा प्रतिशिरश्चापि कर्तव्यं नाटकाश्रयम्।

and the lowest characters will be bare-headed (*śīrṣamaulinaḥ*).[37] The *pratiśiras* of ministers etc. have a turban-like band furnished for the purpose of fastening.[38] It is said in general that the *śira* should be appropriately made to suit various conditions, or the nature and type of representation.[39]

Yet Bharata further provides detailed instructions for the preparation of *pratiśīrṣakas*;[40] and the crowns are supposed to be fixed on them. In this place *pratiśīrṣaka* appears to mean a mask.

Abhinava understands the word to mean 'a head appropriate to the character to be represented'[41]. It appears from his comment that masks were used when the character was to be shown as possessed of two heads, three heads etc., or where the actor's head had to be covered by another.[42]

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[37] NS. GOS, XXI. 142:
उत्तमा ये च दिव्यानां ते च कार्याः किरीटिनः ।
मध्यमा मौलिनश्चैव कनिष्ठाः शीर्षमौलिनः ॥
KM, XXI. 118 b-119 a (v. l. 'कनिष्ठाः पार्श्वमौलिनः'); KSS, XXIII. 133 (a, 'पार्श्वगता मरतकिनस्तथा चैव किरीटिनः ।').

[38] NS. GOS, XXI. 149:
अमात्यानां कञ्चुकिनां तथा श्रेष्ठिपुरोधसाम् ।
वेष्टनाबद्धपट्टानि प्रतिशीर्षाणि कारयेत् ॥
KM, XXI. 123 reads 'वेष्टिनाबद्धबद्धानि';
KSS, XXIII. 139 reads 'वेष्टनं बन्धपट्टादि'.

[39] NS. GOS, XXI. 156 b; KM, XXI. 127 b:
शिरः प्रयोक्तृभिः कार्यं नानावस्थान्तराश्रयम् ॥
KSS, XXIII. 141 (v. l. 'प्रयोगस्य वशानुगम्').

[40] NS. GOS, XXI. 186-195; KM, XXI. 152-161; KSS, XXIII. 176-186. (The reading here is 'तथा शीर्षविधानार्थं पटी कार्या' instead of 'अथ शीर्षविभागार्थं घटी कार्या'). See GOS. XXI. 195 a: 'तस्योपरिगताः कार्या मुकुटा बहुशिल्पजाः ।'

[41] Read, NS. GOS, vol. III, ch. XXI, p. 132, Comm.
'प्रकृतिरूपं शिरः प्रतिशिरः ।'

[42] Commenting on शीर्षविभाग, NS. GOS, vol. III, ch. XXI. 186, Abhinava writes: शीर्षविभागा इति यत्र द्विशिरास्त्रिशिरा इत्यादि दृश्यते, यत्र वा निजशिर एव आच्छाद्य शिरोऽन्तरं प्रदर्श्यते । (pp. 138-139).

Konow and Lanman translate *paḍisisa* in *Karpūramañjarī* by 'mask'. M. Ghosh similarly renders the word in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by 'mask'.[43] But in the two references occurring in *Karpūramañjarī*, the one by the Sūtradhāra to the actors' *pratiśīrṣakas*, and the other by the Vidūṣaka to his own, it is possible to interpret the word to mean a 'head-dress' only. It is only in the reference to the maidens wearing *pratiśīrṣakas* of night-ogresses that the word perhaps means a mask.

However, Bharata prescribes the use of tawny hair and eyes,[44] and long hair[45] for the demons etc. This would suggest that the *pratiśira* was not a mask but a *wig*. And in the above reference we have probably to understand that the maidens put on wigs to dance the ogresses' dance.

There is a further point. There are no rules available anywhere for the use of masks; and it is doubtful whether masks were used in all plays and by all characters.[46] At least Bharata does not seem to have contemplated the use of mask by the Vidūṣaka, since he prescribes a shaved head with two side-locks, and a face painted with stripes of colour for this character.

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[43] Karpūra., HOS. See, Glossarial Index, p. 146.
M. Ghosh, NS, Tr. pp. 429-430; 435-436.

[44] NS. GOS, XXI. 144 b:
रक्षोदानवदैत्यानां पिङ्गकेशेक्षणानि हि ।
KM, XXI. 121 has 'देवदानव°'; KSS, XXIII. 143 reads 'मुखशीर्षाणि' which, no doubt, means a 'mask'.

[45] NS. GOS, XXI. 150; KM, XXI. 124:
पिशाचोन्मत्तभूतानां साधकानां तपस्विनाम् ।
अनिस्तीर्णप्रतिज्ञानां लम्बकेशं भवेच्छिरः ॥
KSS, XXIII. 144 ('लम्बकेशं तु शीर्षकम्').

[46] M. Ghosh who translates the word *pratiśīrṣaka* invariably by 'mask', admits that, "It is not laid down anywhere whether masks are to be used in all types of plays and for all characters." NS. Tr. p. 429, footnote to XXIII. 128.

Even though, therefore, the use of masks was authorised by Bharata, it appears to me that in normal representations particular *head-dresses* and *wigs* were used; and that masks were employed either in symbolic dance representations; or for portraying abnormal characters like a two-headed monster, or the ten-necked Rāvaṇa; or in pantomimic representation.

The evidence may be interpreted, therefore, as only indicating varying dramatic practice current on the Indian stage in different periods. If the Vidūṣaka wore a three-cornered cap in the Gupta period, it is possible to understand that the 'wooden ears' mentioned by Vimala, and the aweful 'basket-like' ears mentioned by Rājaśekhara, were attached to the head-dress of the Vidūṣaka; and that they were not a part of a face-mask.

In the vernacular dramas enacted on the modern Marāṭhī stage the Vidūśaka, or a Brahmin character generally, wears a roundish, red skull-cap, fitting tightly on the pate and its edges turned up on either ears. This may be a modern version of Bharata's prescription of *triśikha.*

We cannot be certain, therefore, that the Vidūṣaka wore a face-mask. If his mis-shapen head, or funny ears could be shown by the use of attached devices, it is probable that his monkey-like appearance, or ugliness, was indicated by an appropriate make-up only; and that this occasionally included a wig of hair and a false beard.

There is no direct prescription available of the dress worn by the Vidūṣaka. In the above context Bharata mentions 'barks' and 'skins',[47] in which the actor must have dressed himself in the character role. Rāmacandra[48] mentions a 'loose garment', that is, the lower garment, or *dhoti*, which the Vidūṣaka put on very loosely and which must have caused some laughter among

[47] See note (9): 'चीरचर्म°'.

[48] Cf. नेपथ्यहास्यमस्थायताम्बरत्वोल्लोकितविलोकितगमनादिना ।
ND. GOS, No. 48, Comm. p. 199.

the audience. Sāgaranandin[49] says that the Vidūṣaka is a character that moves in the harem; and this is quite true, since the Vidūṣaka is a friend of the king and has a free access to the harem. Bharata has incidentally provided the dress for such characters as move in the harem:[50] It consists of 'tawny robes or garments, and bands'. A choice of bark, skin (that is, deer-skin probably), a brown robe, or a loose lower garment must have been put to use according to the type of the Vidūṣaka that was to be represented on the stage.[51] It may be that the dress of the Vidūṣaka was 'ugly' as Śāradātanaya says;[52] or 'shapeless' as Śiṅga Bhūpāla says;[53] and that, it was intended to evoke laughter.

The dramatists take the Vidūṣaka to be a Brahmin; and add, therefore, the inevitable *yajñopavīta* or the sacred thread, which is the caste mark of a Dvija. And like some other details connected with the Vidūṣaka, the sacred thread, too, is put to comical use. Santuṣṭa, for instance, says that he is a Brahmin only in virtue of his sacred thread.[54] Cārudatta pulls Maitreya by his sacred thread to make him sit down by his side, when the latter was chasing pigeons.[55] Gautama shows greater ingenuity in using his sacred thread to tie up his finger in a

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[49] Cf. वयस्यकः सहचरः स एव विदूषकः ।
अन्तःपुरचरो राज्ञां नर्मामात्यः प्रकीर्तितः ॥
NLRK. ll. 2199-2200; p. 92.

[50] Cf. काषायकञ्चुकपटाः कार्यास्तेऽपि यथाविधि ।
NS. GOS, XXI. 133 and 134 a; KM, XXI. 109-110; KSS, XXIII. 126.

[51] See further under the heading, TYPES.

[52] Cf. 'विरूपस्तु विदूषकः', BP. GOS, No. 45, p. 244; and 'विरूपवेषश्च,' pp. 281-282.

[53] Cf. विकृताङ्गवचोवेषैः हास्यकारी विदूषकः ।
RS. TSS, I. 92 a; p. 21.

[54] Avi., V. 5.[24]: आम भोदि । जण्णोपवीदेण बम्हणो...।

[55] Mṛc., V. 11.[31]. Read: चारुदत्तः—(यज्ञोपवीत आकृष्य) वयस्य उपविश ।

pretended snake-bite.[56] Vasantaka in *Ratnāvalī* swears by his sacred thread to support his statement.[57] Ātreya is pulled by the Ceṭa by his sacred thread which snaps in the ensuing scuffle.[58]

The dramatists mention a few details of dress, cosmetics and decoration, which the Vidūṣakas acquire by way of presents. Thus, Māṇavaka receives flowers and unguents.[59] Ātreya gets fragrant unguents and a wreath of flowers at the wedding of the hero.[60]

Harṣa has mentioned a pair of silken garments[61] and a pair of red robes[62] which are presented to the Vidūṣaka. There is also a present of some ornaments: an ear-ring,[63] necklace, and a gold bracelet. The Vidūṣaka is so pleased that he dons the bracelet and wants to show if off before his wife.[64]

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[56] Mālavikā., IV. 3.[5]. Read the following stage-direction : ततः प्रविशति यज्ञोपवीतबद्धाङ्गुष्ठः संभ्रान्तो विदूषकः ।

[57] Ratnā., II. 19.[38–39] : भोदि सच्चं सच्चं । सवामि बम्हसुत्तेण जइ ईदिसी कदा वि अम्हेहिं दिट्ठपुव्वा ।

[58] Nāgā., III. 3.[26]. Read the stage-direction : चेटः—(विदूषकं यज्ञोपवीते गृह्णाति । यज्ञोपवीतं त्रुट्यति ।).

[59] Vik., V. [6–7]: ता जाव तत्तभवदो अलंकरीअमाणस्स अणुलेवणमल्ले अग्गभागी होमि ।

[60] Nāgā., act III. 2.[2,26–29] : (ततः प्रविशति स्कन्धन्यस्तवस्त्रयुगलो विदूषकः ।) विदूषकः—...जं तं मलअवदीबन्धुजणेण जामादुअस्स पिअवअस्सो त्ति कदुअ सबहुमाणं सुगन्धवण्णकेहिं विलित्तोम्हि संताणकुसुमसेहरओ मम सीसे पिणद्धं... ।

[61] Ratnā., act IV, interlude, l. 13 : अण्णं च, एदं पट्टंसुअजुअलं कण्णाभरणं अ दिण्णं ।

[62] Nāgā., act III. 2.[30–31]: अहवा एदेण एव्व मलअवदीसआसादो लद्धेण रत्तंसुअजुअलेण... ।

[63] Ratnā., act IV, interlude, l. 13. See note (61).

[64] Ratnā., The reference to necklace or *Ratnamālā* is at IV. 4.[1–2] : राजा—वयस्य, त्वं परिधत्स्वैताम् ।...विदूषकः—जं भवं आणवेदि । (परिदधाति ।)
That to *Kaṭaka* occurs in the stage-direction just before

Cārāyaṇa of Rājaśekhara is shown as appropriating to himself the garments and ornaments left over by the hero after he had dressed for his wedding.[65] Kapiñjala is shown as wearing an *uttarīya*, an upper garment, which he folds and offers as a seat to Karpūramañjarī when she makes her first appearance.[66]

The Vidūṣaka carried in his hand a stick called '*daṇḍa-kāṣṭha*' or '*kuṭilaka*'. Such a stick, according to Bharata, was to be made out of *Kapittha* or *Bilva* wood, or bamboo; it was to be crooked in three places; unaffected by worms, not rotten, and having as few knots, from which branches shoot, as possible.[67] Abhinava comments that the *kuṭilaka*, or the crooked staff, is intended for the use of the Vidūṣaka.[68] Originally it was the weapon of Brahmā, given by him, and was meant to instil fear into the *Vighnas*, or the 'Dangers', which had threatened the dramatic performance; the *Vighnas* were beaten off the stage with this staff, which came to be known as a *Jarjara*.[69] The Vidūṣaka carried this *jarjara* as a symbol of protection in the *Pūrvaraṅga*. Later on, the stick became an accessory; and the Vidūṣaka chased away with it bees and pigeons in a comic show of heroism.

It should be obvious from the above discussion that a few additions have been made to the details prescribed by Bharata

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II. 9. Another reference is at III. 4.[20–21]: विदूषकः—(कटकं परिधाय आत्मानं निर्वर्ण्य) भो इमं ताव सुद्धसोवण्णकडअमण्डिअहत्थं अत्तणो बम्हणीए गदुअ दंसइस्सं ।

[65] Viddha., act IV.

[66] Karpūra., act I.

[67] NS. GOS, XXI. 183-185; KM, XXI. 148b, 149-151; KSS, XXIII. 173-175.

[68] Cf. 'कुटिलकमिति । वक्रदण्डो विदूषकोपयोगी...ब्रह्मायुधात्मा दण्डोपकामत्वेन भीषणत्वापात्यादपीत्यर्थः ।' NS. GOS. Comm. on I. 60; p. 27.

[69] NS. GOS, I. 72-73; KM, I. 39; KSS. I. 74.

in connection with the make-up, appearance and dress of the Vidūṣaka, as some alterations have been effected in them. But these obviously relate to the contemporary habits of dress and to the conventions of dramatic practice prevalent on the stage at different periods. It is natural that the character of the Vidūṣaka was made up according to current trends and modes. However, it is certain that whatever outward form the Vidūṣaka wore and whatever dress he put on, the governing principle underlying his appearance must have always been that of comic laughter.

IV

CASTE

In defining the appearance of the Vidūṣaka, Bharata[1] uses the word '*dvijanmā*', which, really speaking, indicates a member of the first three castes only. An alternative reading describes the Vidūṣaka to be '*dvijihva*', double-tongued, serpent-like. This can have reference only to the inconsistent speech and bluffing which are characteristic of the Vidūṣaka. But in another place Bharata uses the word '*vipra*',[2] which leaves no doubt about the supposed caste of the Vidūṣaka. This detail has to be understood in connection with the particular type of the Vidūṣaka; for, Bharata recognises an 'ascetic' type also.[3] The earliest Vidūṣaka, as previously suggested, should have been a Brahmin; and hence, his descendent on the stage also came to be looked upon as such.

The later theorists are silent about this point; but it may

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[1] NS. KM, XXIV. 106; KSS, XXXV. 57 (v. l. 'द्विजिह्वो'). See Note (1) to ch. III.

[2] NS. GOS, XII. 142 b: यस्ताद्दृशो भवेद् विप्रा (विप्रो ?) हास्यो नेपथ्यजस्तु सः। KSS, XII. 140.

J. T. Parikh notes this as XII. 126 b in KM, first ed.; *op. cit.*, Appendix, p. 41; it is not found in 1894 ed.

Ghosh translates, "..a person..." etc., so the word *vipra* does not figure in the translation. (XIII. 141-142).

[3] Cf. 'एतेषां पुनर्ज्ञेयाश्चत्वारस्तु विदूषकाः ॥
लिङ्गी द्विजो राजजीवी शिष्यश्चेति यथाक्रमम्।
देवक्षितिभृतामात्यब्राह्मणानां प्रयोजयेत् ॥

NS. GOS, XXIV. 19 b, 20.

KM, XXIV. 5 has only, 'एतेषां...विदूषकाः ॥'

KSS, XXXIV. 19 b, 20; the reading however is curious: 'लिङ्गानि ते वरजवा शिष्टाश्चेति यथाक्रमम्।'

be assumed that they tacitly accept this trait. The available classical dramas, however, unmistakably show the Vidūṣaka to be a Brahmin; and this, as we shall see, is quite in keeping with the theory.

What could have led Bharata to prescribe that the Vidūṣaka should be a Brahmin? There is no data available to answer this question, except to aver that it has been so; that it is a commonly accepted convention that the Vidūṣaka should be a Brahmin. But one may speculate on the possibilities:

(i) According to Bharata the Vidūṣaka first appeared in the *Pūrvaraṅga*,[4] which has predominantly a religious character. In a religious ceremony the presence of a Brahmin is invariably necessary. While the Sūtradhāra who conducted the *Pūrvaraṅga* may or may not have been a Brahmin, the necessary presence of a Brahmin was perhaps sought to be secured by prescribing that the Vidūṣaka, or the Assistant who sometimes played the role of the Vidūṣaka, appeared as a Brahmin character. It is a significant fact that Bharata permits the Assistant to appear as a Vidūṣaka in the *Pūrvaraṅga*:[5] What Bharata wanted was the Vidūṣaka, that is to say, a Brahmin, in the *Pūrvaraṅga*; it was not always necessary that the particular stock character alone appeared therein; and hence, the substitution was possible. But then this clearly shows that the Brahmin caste associated with the Vidūṣaka was neither an accident nor a convenient factor picked up for fun-making. It was necessitated by the several functions which Bharata

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[4] The item of the *Pūrvaraṅga* in which the Vidūṣaka appeared is called *Trigata*. NS. GOS, V. 29, 139-140; KM, V. 124 b, 125; KSS, V. 136 b, 137, 138. See further under the heading, FUNCTION AND ROLE—I.

[5] Commenting on NS. V. 29 (GOS), Abhinava writes: 'पारिपार्श्विकयोरन्यतरो विदूषकवेषभाषाचारो विदूषकः ।' Rāmacandra comments: 'पारिपार्श्विक एव विदूषकवेषधारी विदूषकः ।' ND. GOS, No. 48; Viveka III, comm. on 105 (p. 153).

expected the Vidūṣaka to perform, in addition to his general function of producing laughter. For these other functions, as for the religious function in the *Pūrvaraṅga*, it was very helpful if the Vidūṣaka were a Brahmin.

(ii) Bharata has conceived specific types of heroes for Sanskrit drama: [6] god, king, minister and merchant. The last, in the available example of *Mṛcchakaṭika*, happens to be actually a Brahmin by caste. The Vidūṣaka is invariably a companion of the hero. As such, it is necessary that he should have a social status consistent with his role and in keeping with the dignity of the character whose companion he is supposed to be. In the actual presentation of a drama on the stage, the companion of the hero, if he were to belong to a low caste, would have been rather an awakward figure; and when further it is remembered that the audience generally prefer and respect the prevailing conventions, it would have also been necessary to explain how the dignified hero came to have a low caste companion, if the latter were so. In other words, in a farcical representation the dignity of characters is a matter for ridicule and mixing up of the social status becomes, therefore, a dramatic device for caricature; but in a dignified comedy, as most of the classical plays are, such a device would be in bad taste.

(iii) The prevailing type of Sanskrit Romantic Comedy has invariably a king as the hero. The Vidūṣaka in these plays is shown to be having a free access to the king's harem. Such a privilege could be accorded naturally and without any embarrassment to a Brahmin only who represented the highest social class.

(iv) The Vidūṣaka enjoys another privilege: His tongue is free. He can make fun of everybody, including the king and the queen. This part he could play better, without

[6] Cf. 'अत्र चत्वार एव स्युः नायकाः परिकीर्तिताः ।' NS. GOS, XXIV. 16-19 a; 'नाट्ये चत्वार एवैते नायकाः परिकीर्तिताः ।' KM, XXIV. 2-5 a; KSS, XXXIV. 16-19 a (identical with GOS).

malice or offence, by being a member of the socially highest class.

(v) A cultural factor may be noted : The Vidūṣaka, apart from his buffoonery, is, no doubt, intelligent and possesses a special aptitude for comic perception. These qualities demand education and culture. In the ancient society it was the higher castes who had the privilege to receive education and cultural refinement. It could not be surprising, therefore, if the humorous and witty companions of the aristocracy were to a large extent drawn from the Brahmin class.

(vi) The Vidūṣaka is also a butt of ridicule, an object of laughter. If so, the people could have loved nothing better any day than the socially highest class being exposed and held to ridicule. This is human psychology, which would appear to be true for all times.

Thus, it is neither an unaccountable freak nor a literary accident that the Vidūṣaka in Sanskrit dramas happens to be a Brahmin. Nor is a single factor, perhaps, responsible for it. The conventions of Sanskrit drama, combined with social, cultural and psychological factors must have cast this character in the particular mould.

It is not true that the Vidūṣaka as such ought invariably to be a Brahmin. Else, Bharata's description of the 'types' of the Vidūṣakas and the companionship of a Vidūṣaka appropriate to the type of the hero, of which he speaks, will have no meaning. In the evolution of Sanskrit drama, a king came to be gradually accepted as the appropriate hero of a dramatic composition ; and in propriety, as well as for other reasons mentioned above, the dramatists portrayed the Vidūṣaka as a Brahmin.

V

FOOD AND DRINK

There is no prescription available in theory about the food, drink etc., of the Vidūṣaka. But the dramatists have shown the Vidūṣaka, as a Brahmin, to be very fond of food.

Vasantaka in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* displays sufficient intelligence to be able to trace the lost bowl of his *modakas*; he is prepared to argue and fight with the madman with whom he discovers them; he weeps for them; and when finally he realises that they were not real *modakas* but balls of scented flour only, he regrets both his loss as well as his gullibility. Vasantaka in *Svapnavāsavadatta* is tremendously enjoying his stay in the Magadhan palace which, to him, is a veritable Paradise. His particular joy is the tender and delicate dishes of sweets, like those of *modakas*, that he is able to swallow in the palace; and he naturally prefers Padmāvatī to Vāsavadattā, because the former looks after his food with affectionate solicitude. Santuṣṭa in *Avimāraka* has allowed himself to be duped by a naughty maid by the prospect of a meal; but the deception has not checked his eagerness for food; he does not like to miss the meal-time even for the sake of his love-lorn friend, the hero; to the weeping heroine he recommends *bhojana* and the white-washed mansions appear to him like balls of white *curds*.

Maitreya in *Mṛcchakaṭika* draws his analogies from the province of food; he rejects the Sūtradhāra's invitation for dinner only because he is already engaged; he recalls with touching sorrow the prosperous days in Cārudatta's house when he could feed himself like a bull in the city-square; the apartment that he likes most in Vasantasenā's palatial residence is the kitchen, and his bitter resentment is that Vasantasenā did not offer him food or water; he is even prepared to be

seized with fever if only he could grow as fat as Vasantasenā's mother with over-eating.

Gautama is, according to the maid, given to filling his belly with *modakas* presented in *swastivācana*. He is most helpful to the hero ; but his top priority is food ; the meal-time cannot be disturbed either by the musical concert or by the hero's love-longing. For Māṇavaka, food is the stuff of life ; it invariably colours his conscious or unconscious state of mind. He attributes the distracted condition of the hero to upsetting of bile and recommends food. The rising moon is to him like a broken *modaka*. He can transfer his loyalty to the queen with a present of *modakas*. Obviously food is the fond theme of a glutton. Māḍhavya can give his fullest co-operation only in the eating of *modakas*. When the hero is consumed with auguish of love, he is devoured by hunger. Māḍhavya naturally hates the hunting expedition because there he has to eat only roasted food at irregular hours and drink the bitter, lukewarm water of mountain streams.

Vasantaka in *Priyadarśikā* delightfully goes through the ritual of bathing at the garden well and of moving his lips as if in Vedic recitation to be ready, like a good Brāhmaṇa, to receive the *Swastivācana* from the queen. Vasantaka in *Ratnāvalī* is always eager to receive presents ; and since food is the only thing he knows well, he easily mistakes the *Dvipadī khaṇḍa*, a dance item, to be an item of food. Ātreya is uneasy because the hero is living like an ascetic ; he has to grab roots and fruits to stay his devouring hunger ; it is only at the wedding of the hero that he probably must have got food to his heart's content.

It appears from these descriptions that the Brāhmaṇa Vidūṣaka is not only very fond of food but is particularly partial to sweets, and loves the smell of seasoned preparations. The most common item that is mentioned is the inevitable *modaka* or the ball of sweet. Maitreya mentions but once the *apūpa*.[1]

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[1] Cf. 'बज्झन्ति मोदआ पच्चन्ति अपूवआ ।' Mṛc., IV. 27.अ.

Ātreya's grub consisted, for some time, of *roots* and *fruits.*[2] Māḍhavya complains of unseasoned food; he refers metaphorically once to *tintiṇī* (tamarind) and *piṇḍakharjūra* (dates),[3] the former as an item of seasoning, and the latter as a sweet snack. Maitreya smelt in Vasantasenā's kitchen the articles that were fried with *Hiṅgu* and *oil.*[4] *Sneha* or *ghṛta* (ghee) is also mentioned[5] and *sugar* is of course there.[6]

Māṇavaka confesses once to his pleasure of *Śikhariṇī* and *rasālā*;[7] the former is a preparation of mashed ripe bananas in milk and sugar; the latter must be mango juice.

But the passage in *Vikramorvaśīya* where the words *Śikhariṇī* and *rasālā* occur seems to have been tampered with by the copyists. Mr. S. P. Pandit points out that two of the eight manuscripts which he collated for the purpose of editing the text of the play, show the readings to be '*micchahariṇī-maṅsabhoaṇam*' and '*sihariṇīm maṅsa-bhoaṇam*' respectively.[8]

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[2] Cf. 'जेण बह्मणो अदिही भविअ मुणिजणसआसादो लध्देहिं **कंदमूलफलेहिं** पि दाव पाणधारणं करिस्सं।' Nāgā., I. 19.[3–4].

[3] Cf. 'जह कस्स वि **पिण्डखज्जूरेहिं** उव्वेजिदस्स **तिन्तिणीए** अहिलासो भवे..।' Śāk., II. 8.[1–2].

[4] Cf. '...अअं दलिद्दजणलोहुप्पादणअरो आहरइ उवचिदो **हिंगुतेल्लगंधो**।' Mṛc., IV. 27.[86–87].

[5] Cf. '...अह्माणं पदीविआओ अवमाणिदनिद्धणकामुआ विअ गणिआ **णिस्सिणेहाणो** दाणिं संवुत्ता।' Mṛc., I. 56.[45–46].

Also, 'णहि घिद्वअणेण पित्तं णस्सदि।' Avi. V. 5.[59].

[6] Cf. 'ही ही, इअं खु सीहुपाणुव्वेजिदस्स **मच्छण्डिआ** उवणदा।' Mālavika., III. 5.[12–13].

[7] Cf. '..अहं पि जदा **सिहरिणीं रसालं** अ ण लहे...।' Vik. III. 10.[3–4].

[8] Vik. edited by S. P. Pandit (Bombay, Government Central Book Depot, 1879). The reading is: 'मिच्छहरिणीमंसभोअणं ण लभे...।' Vik. III. 10.[2–3]. In the foot-note to this passage (op. cit. p. 81), Pandit writes, "That Vidūṣaka is not averse to animal food may be seen from Śākuntala Act II, Speech 1.

Obviously these must have been the earlier readings. But since these indicate *venison* and *meat*, the later copyists and commentators must have altered them, shuddering naturally at the idea of a Brahmin Vidūṣaka partaking of non-vegetarian food. However, this is of no use. If ancient practices were to to be judged by modern usage, history and evolution will have no meaning. The Brahmins in ancient India had no objection to meat-eating, not only during ritual ceremonies but in routine course also. Bhavabhūti mentions how Vālmīki arranged for the preparation of *beef* in honour of Vasiṣṭha, a distinguished sage.[9] Maitreya saw in Vasantasenā's house the butcher-boy washing the entrails of animal;[10] and the excitement with which he notices these details and the longing which he expresses for being invited to dine,[11] clearly point out to the fact that Maitreya was willing to eat non-vegetarian preparations. Māḍhavya regrets that he has to be satisfied 'mostly with meat roasted on iron spits'[12] during Duṣyanta's hunting expedition;

It is very natural that modern Brāhmaṇas should make Vidūṣaka more fond of Śikhariṇī than of venison, though in reality he only cares for the former, and should have changed the reading accordingly. Kāṭayavema and Raṅganātha too have apparently yielded to the same prejudice against animal food and to the temptation to change the correct or prefer the modernized reading."

[9] Cf. URC., IV. Interlude, I.[14,15-17]: 'समांसो मधुपर्क इत्याम्नायं बहुमन्यमानाः श्रोत्रियायाभ्यागताय वत्सतरीं महोक्षं वा महाजं वा निर्वपन्ति गृहमेधिनः। तं हि धर्मं धर्मसूत्रकाराः समामनन्ति।'.

[10] Cf. Mṛc., IV. 27.[89-90]: 'अअं अवरो पडच्चर विअ पोट्टिं धोअदि रूपिदारओ।'

[11] Cf. Mṛc., IV. 27.[91-92]: 'अवि दाणिं इह वड्ढिअं भुंजसु त्ति पादोदअं लहिस्सं।'

[12] Cf. Śāk., II. ll. 5-6: 'अणिअदवेलं सुल्लमंसभूइट्ठो आहारो अण्हीअदि।'

Prof. Karmarkar (Vik., Second ed. 1932, Notes, p. 201) who is not prepared to accept flesh-eating in the case of Brahmins, accuses Pandit of having 'yielded to the temptation of

and his regret is not on account of the fact that he is forced to eat meat; what he is missing are the seasoned preparations; roasted mutton is plain and without taste; the Vidūṣaka would have loved varied fare! It appears, therefore, that Kālidāsa

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forcing animal food upon the Brahmin Vidūṣaka'. (See Note (8) above.) Karmarkar writes, "The reference to Śāk. II can also be explained away. Vidūṣaka says in that place 'meals mostly consisting of roasted meat are taken.' Now Vidūṣaka describes here the condition of the whole of the hunting party, not necessarily, of himself. Again, Vidūṣaka is complaining against the hunting party. If he is taken to be a flesh-eater, his complaint has no force, because he *does* get plenty of roasted meat. But Vidūṣaka's point is that while everybody else is satisfied with the meals consisting mostly of roasted meat, he, a poor Brahmin, is practically starved as he has to be content with the little vegetable food served out to him. At any rate, flesh-eating is uncommon even among the Northern Brahmins who are not averse to having fish for their food."

Prof. Karmarkar's assumption that the Vidūṣaka is describing the condition of the entire hunting party is absolutely misleading. The Vidūṣaka opens his speech with, 'I grieve at the companionship of this king who is so fond of hunting.' The condition described therefore is his own. Are we to imagine that the complaint about food, drink, continuous riding on horse-back, stiffness of limbs, physical paralysis, and insufficient sleep represent the condition of the whole of the army? The hunting is a nightmare to the comfort-loving Brāhmaṇa; but it cannot be so in the case of the soldiers and the hunters who comprise the party; they must be virtually enjoying the sport. Prof. Karmarkar has really missed the point in the Vidūṣaka's complaint. He is sore first because, the meals are served at irregular hours (अणिअदवेलं); and secondly because, the fare consists mostly of roasted meat (सुल्लमंसभूइट्ठो आहारो); the preparations lack *seasoning* and *variety*, which is really what a lover of food like him could enjoy.

and Śūdraka include non-vegetarian items in the food of the Brahmin Vidūṣaka. And so does Mahādeva in *Adbhutadarpaṇa*. The Vidūṣaka Mahodara is a companion of Rāvaṇa and a priest of the Brahmarākṣasa family; he has no objection to meat-eating.[13] The practice fell out of use in course of time; and so, the later dramatists naturally show the Vidūṣaka as a vegetarian Brāhmaṇa.

There is no clear reference to 'drink'. *Water*[14] is, of course, frequently mentioned along with *bhojana*. But since the use of sweet wines, if not liquors, was common particularly on festive occasions and celebrations of secular nature, one may feel that the Vidūṣaka perhaps did not object to the occasional use of wine. Bhāsa's Vasantaka in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* says that the *modakas* he had received were only *kaṇṇila-laḍḍuā*;[15]

It is interesting to note that Abhirāma, who is a Northerner, supports the reading and justifies the flesh-eating on the part of Brahmins by quotations from the *Āraṇyakaparvan*. Prof. Gajendragadakar's comment on the above passage is, "The Vidūṣaka had no objection to eat flesh. This is indicative of the antiquity of the play." (Śāk., 4th ed., 1950, Notes, p. 276.) As a matter of fact, there is plenty of evidence to show that Brahmins partook of meat in ancient days. The prohibition came in course of time, particularly from the strong influence of religion.

[13] Viddujjihva describes Mahodara as follows: मज्जास्नेहविनिष्पक्वमांसमोदकस्वादनैः । विजिह्मितमुखो मन्दं विह्वलं चाभिवर्तते ॥ *Adbhuta* V. 30.

Mahodara himself admits: 'पच्चग्गमंसमोदआणं परिपूरिअपिच्चण्डअेण... मए...' etc.

[14] Cf. Mālavikā., II. 12.[9]: 'मोदि विसेसेण पाणभोअणं तुवरावेहि ।'

Vik., III. 17.[8]: 'किं वा सग्गे सुमरिदव्वं । ण वा अण्हीअदि ण वा पीअदि ।'
Śāk., II.[4–5]: 'पत्तसंकरकसाआइं कदुण्हाइं गिरिणईजलाइं पीअन्ति ।'

[15] Cf. Pratijñā., III. 1.[54]: 'अविहा मोदआणि त्ति करिअ कण्णिल्लड्डुआ मे प्रतीष्टाः ।'

the word means, 'balls of flour prepared with liquor;'[16] the Śramaṇaka in this scene describes these *modakas* to be 'as sweet as mulled wine.'[17] If the Vidūṣaka were to have eaten them, it may be permitted to infer that he did not mind the use of wine. When Gautama spots Mālavikā in the Pramadavana, he says to the lovelorn king, "Ha, ha! this is fine sugar brought over to a person sick with drinking liquor!"[18] Is the observation of Gautama prompted by general knowledge or by personal experience? If the descriptions found in Sanskrit poetry and drama are to be relied on, it appears that there was no objection to drinking, at least on festive occasions.[19]

It may be noted finally that Śāradātanaya lists, among the qualities of the Vidūṣaka attached to the Dhīralalita type of hero represented by minister and others, fondness for food both prescribed and prohibited.[20] It may be presumed that some dramatists utilized this trait as much in conformity with the rule as with the permitted social practice. The Vidūṣaka in *Adbhutadarpaṇa* is a case in point. It may not be correct, therefore, to interpret such details in the light of the later prohibition regarding food and drink.

In fact, the food and drink of the Vidūṣaka are, like his stage appearance and dress, related to contemporary conventions and social usage. These latter are bound to change; and when they did so, the things associated with the Vidūṣaka also underwent a corresponding change.

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[16] कण्डिलं = सुरायुक्तम्. C. R. Devadhar, *Bhāsanāṭakacakram*, Select Glossary.

[17] Cf. Pratijñā., III. 1.48–50: '...एदाणि मोदआणि...णिड्डाणिआ सुरा विअ महुराणि।'

[18] Mālavikā., III. 5.12–13; quoted above in note (6).

[19] Cf. *Kumārasaṁbhava*, III. 38; *Ratnā.*, act. I. 9.3–4: 'पेक्ख दाव इमस्स **महुमत्तकामिणीजण**-सअंगाहगहिद-सिङ्गकजल...।'; act I. 16b: **क्षीबाया** नूपुरौ च द्विगुणतरमिमौ क्रन्दतः पादलग्नौ।'

[20] Cf. BP. GOS, ch. IX: **भक्ष्याभक्ष्यप्रियो** नित्यं मर्मस्पृङ् नर्म वक्ति च।' (p. 282, l. 3).

VI

LANGUAGE

Though the Vidūṣaka is a Brahmin, he speaks in the Prakrit language. Bharata clearly lays down that the speeches of the Vidūṣaka should be written in Eastern Prakrit.[1]

This rule is scrupulously followed by Sanskrit dramatists. Among the theorists, Sāgaranandin[2] mentions the rule; Rāmacandra[3] endorses it indirectly; while the others seem to take it for granted.

That the Vidūṣaka should be a Brahmin but should speak in Prakrit seems, on the face of it, rather strange. But it is possible to adduce definite reasons for this puzzling prescription:

(i) In the section where he lays down rules for the use of a particular language by the dramatic characters, Bharata assumes a threefold distinction among the characters[4]: the highest,

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[1] Cf. 'प्राच्या विदूषकादीनां...' NS. GOS, XVII. 52; KM, XVII. 51; KSS, XVIII. 38a: 'प्राच्या विदूषकादीनां योज्या भाषा अवन्तिजा।'

See, Prof. Dr. D. G. Koparkar's paper '*Prācyā the Dialect of the Vidūṣaka*'—BDCRI, Vol. IV, 1943, pp. 387-397.

[2] Cf. 'शौरसेनीमथ प्राच्यामावन्तीं कर्हिचित् पठेत्।
एता एव वणिक्श्रेष्ठिबालकाश्च विदूषकाः॥'

NLRK. ll. 51-52 (p. 90).

[3] Cf. ND. GOS, IV. 167.: 'नीचा विदूषक-क्लीब-शकार-विट-किङ्कराः।' The Comm. adds, 'एषां च नीचत्वं नैसर्गिकम्।' Since the Vidūṣaka belongs to the category of lower characters, his use of Prakrit is inevitable.

[4] NS. Ch. XVII—'भाषालक्षण'; KM,—'काकुस्वरविधानम्'; KSS, Ch. XXVIII—'भाषाविधानम्'.

See, 'उत्तमैर्मध्यमैर्नीचैः संभाव्या नरा यथा। NS. GOS, XVII. 65a; KM, XVII. 65a; KSS. XVIII. 2a.

which include the hero, ministers, ascetics and priests; the middling, which include Brahmins in general, pupils, chamberlains, the King's officers etc.; and the lower, which include women in general and the servants or assistants in the royal household. It will not be quite correct to say that these distinctions invariably correspond to actual social classes. For, the Brahmins as a whole are a superior class socially, although they are put here in the second category. Similarly, the queen should naturally occupy a high position; but she is put down here in the lower category and as a woman character speaks Prakrit. It is more correct to say, therefore, that Bharata's three classes pertain strictly to the nature of dramatic plot; and the characters are classed as the highest, middling and low according to the part that they are supposed to play in the drama proper. In other words, the distinctions of the characters correspond to their status in the dramatic story. Obviously, the Vidūṣaka belongs to the 'low' class in this scale of classification; and hence, Bharata lays down the rule that the Vidūṣaka should use Prakrit like other minor characters in the Sanskrit drama. It is significant to recall in this connection that Indra, disguised as a Brahmin, in Bhāsa's *Karṇabhāra*, speaks Prakrit, while Karṇa and his charioteer Śalya use Sanskrit.

Rāmacandra,[5] among the later theorists, says that the Vidūṣaka, along with the eunuch, Śakāra, Viṭa and the servants, is a low character. The commentary adds that the lowliness of these characters is 'natural'.

(ii) It has been suggested that the Vidūṣaka is a caricature of the ignorant but pretentious Brahmin class; and he is made to speak in Prakrit to make this caricature convincing. Alter-

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Also, 'समासतस्तु प्रकृतिस्त्रिविधा परिकीर्तिता ।
पुरुषाणामथ स्त्रीणामुत्तमाधममध्यमा ॥

NS. GOS, KM, XXIV. 1; KSS. XXXIV. 1b, 2a.

[5] See, Note (3) above.

natively, the use of a particular, alien dialect may be a factor for producing mirth.

But it is obvious that the Vidūṣaka who was a companion of a god, the hero in the first mythological plays, could not have but spoken in Sanskrit. Nārada, for instance, cannot be imagined to be using Prakrit. We have further the evidence of the Javanese theatre where the Vidūṣaka speaks the language of the highest class. The earliest plays, therefore, must have been in pure Sanskrit, and the question of any character, including the Vidūṣaka, making use of Prakrit did not arise at all.

Hence, the use of Prakrit does not appear to be a result wholly of the supposed caricature of a particular type. As a matter of fact, the use of Prakrit or the vernacular speech is a fact of social and cultural development, which accompanied the evolution of the spoken language. Its adoption in the drama is a realistic acknowledgement that the drama must be presented in the language of the people.

The Prakrit had come to be settled gradually as the spoken language of the people and was a normal means of social communication among a very large majority of the masses. The Sanskrit was, after all, the 'polished speech' and could be effectively used only by the educated and the cultured men in their speech as well as their writings. But even then, the author of the *Kāmasūtra* advises against too much use of either Sanskrit or Prakrit especially in social intercourse. It is presumable then that the Brahmins must have been using the spoken tongue—the Prakrit—before they acquired education and training and had mastered the 'cultivated' speech. It is significant to recall that Bhavabhūti makes one of the pupils of Vālmīki speak in Prakrit in *Uttararāmacarita*;[6] and this is generally explained to mean that the boy had not yet mastered the Sanskrit language as the other pupil had done.[7] If these circumstances have any

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[6] URC., act IV, Interlude.

[7] See, Dr. Belwalkar's Notes on the passage. He writes,

reference to social facts, they do point out to the existence of men, even in the Brahmin class, who used Prakrit in their speech. It is true that such men would turn to Sanskrit, as much in virtue of their acquired proficiency as in demonstration of their status as the highest social class in the society. The Vidūṣaka in *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* joins the king in describing the activities of the bees in Spring in a Sanskrit verse; and the king compliments him for his ability to use Sanskrit.[8] However, it must be equally true that a section of Brahmins never grew out of their ignorance and made their living on the strength of the privileges only of their class. Such a section of Brahmins cannot be expected to speak the polished and cultured language that was Sanskrit. Even in modern days such Brahmins would not be difficult to be found whose everyday speech is marked by incorrect pronunciation, faulty grammar and uncouth vocabulary. The Vidūṣaka, I think, represents this section of ignorant Brahmins whose speech could not but be Prakrit. While, therefore, the speech of the Vidūṣaka may contain an element of caricature in it, it no doubt represents an existing social fact also.

It is plain to all students of Sanskrit drama that it is a curious mixture of idealism and realism. While in the conception of characters and the events connected with them, the Sanskrit drama generally stands for types and ideals, it represents the social setting in which the plot is laid always in a completely realistic way. In fact, the very prescription of

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" He (Saudhātakī) is naughty and playful and younger in age. He is not able yet to pronounce the words correctly; hence instead of speaking in Sanskrit, he is using the Prakrit or the spoken language." *Uttararāmacarita*, translated into Marathi, with an Introduction; published by K. R. Gondhalekar, Poona, 1915; p. 174.

[8] Cf. Viddha., act I. 30. The king's remark is:
'संस्कृतेऽपि प्रगल्भसे।'

Bharata for the use of different languages has an important element of realism.[9]

Dr. Bhandarkar writes: "That a poet should make certain persons in his work speak their peculiar dialect, especially when that is an inferior dialect and likely to create mirth, is natural; and this device is resorted to by writers in all countries. But it was probably more from considerations of propriety than liveliness that these languages (Prakrits) began to be used by Sanskrit dramatists...Similarly, the minute directions about the use of certain Prakrit dialects in the case of certain persons are explicable only on the supposition that the original idea was to represent in the drama a state of things actually existing in the world."[10]

(iii) It is further possible to detect a popular element in the Vidūṣaka's use of the Prakrit language. The Sanskrit dramatists surely sought to earn their reputation by the approbation of chosen critics and the learned judges. But at the same time it is to be remembered that the drama was a form of popular entertainment, and the performances must have been given as much by royal order as for catering to the needs of the appreciative masses who flocked to the show on the occasions of festivals and festivities. In virtue of this need, as also in keeping with the principle of realism referred to above, it is but to be expected that the presentation of a drama will be within the grasp of the larger audience and its language will be generally understood by them. This is especially true in the case of the language of the most popular figures of the Sanskrit drama, among whom we have to place the Vidūṣaka. The speech of the Vidūṣaka, therefore, appears to be an inevitable

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[9] Cf. 'एवं भाषाविधानं तु कर्तव्यं नाटकाश्रयम्।
अत्र नोक्तं मया यत्तु लोकाद्ग्राह्यं बुधैस्तु तत्॥
NS. GOS, XVII, 64; KM, XVII. 63; KSS, XVIII. 49. Also, SD. IV. 168: 'यद्देशं नीचपात्रं तु तद्देशं तस्य भाषितम्।'

[10] Cf. *Wilson Philological Lectures*, Lecture VII, p. 277.

concession to the legitimate popular demand. How can a drama entertain properly if the jokes, fun and laughter of the Vidūṣaka were to go over the head of the larger audience?

Humour, we know, is an effective weapon of social satire; and in order that it should really be effective, it is necessary that it is carried in the spoken language. It can be supposed that the Vidūṣaka in Sanskrit dramas, as the chief conventional character for humour, must naturally make use of the Prakrit language.

(iv) The later practice of the Kerala Theatre which is on record amply justifies the above supposition. The Kūṭṭu type in the Kerala Theatre is a peculiar representation of the Sanskrit dramas, where 'the Vidūṣaka appears and gives by word of mouth a vernacular translation of the verses which the hero acts.' The *Kūṭṭu* takes the form of social satire, the mouth-piece of which is 'only the inevitable Vidūṣaka.'

But in this as well as in the Saṅghakkali type, the figure employed for satire or humour is supposed to represent a character drawn from real life, and the use of the vernacular cannot be attributed to the motive of caricature. These Kerala dramatic representations are semi-religious popular entertainments and, hence, a satire, say on the Buddhist's use of the vernacular, is out of question; because 'this is against the religious spirit.' 'We may probably see in this the Buddhist influence in utilizing the spoken language as a medium of religion and religious experience.'[11]

(v) One more thing: Incongruity, as Bharata suggests and as we are aware, is the very essence of the character of the Vidūṣaka. If so, a Brahmin speaking in Prakrit is apt to present a picture of incongruity; and the dramatists must have, therefore, stuck to this detail as an inevitable device for stage laughter.

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[11] Cf. '*Kerala Theatre*' by K. Rama Pisharoti, JAU. Vol. III, No. 2; Oct. 1934.

Thus, the original prescription for the use of Prakrit by the Vidūṣaka was necessitated by the dramatic conventions laid down by Bharata. But its use was also an important factor of realistic representation. Further, as the character came to be identified in later development with the ignorant Brāhmaṇa, Prakrit became a natural speech with him. The dramatists found the Prakrit a realistic medium for the speech of the Vidūṣaka, which they could also utilize for ridicule and for carrying the comic appeal directly to the heart of the masses. It is also likely that the effective use that the Buddha made of the vernacular for religious instruction must have impressed the dramatists, who saw in the use of the Prakrit an unfailing means of winning popular favour.

VII

NAME

Bharata refers to the Vidūṣaka only by this general appellation. It is the later theorists who give proper names by which the Vidūṣaka should be called. Thus, Śāradātanaya[1] gives: Vātsyāyana, Śākalya, Maudgalya, Vasantaka and Gālava. Viśvanātha[2] says that the Vidūṣaka bears Kusuma, Vasanta and such other names. Śiṅga Bhūpāla[3] has Vasantaka, Kāpileya.

The name of the Vidūṣaka in Aśvaghoṣa, Kaumudagandha, conforms to the rule; it denotes 'the off-spring of the lotus-smelling'.[4] Two of Bhāsa's Vidūṣakas[5] and two of Harṣa's,[6]

[1] Cf. वात्स्यायनश्च शाकल्यो मौद्गल्यश्च वसन्तकः ।
गालवश्चेत्येवमादिनामानः स्युर्विदूषकाः ॥
BP. GOS, IX. ll. 5-6, (p. 277).

[2] Cf. SD. III. 42: कुसुमवसन्ताद्यभिधः .... ।

[3] Cf. वसन्तकः कापिलेय इत्याख्येयो विदूषकः ।
RS. TSS, III. 329a, (p. 302).

[4] See, Sk. Dr., p. 85.

[5] In Bhāsa's SV. and Pratijñā.

[6] In Harṣa's Priya. and Ratnā.

That four of the Vidūṣakas in the Sanskrit dramas bear an identical name is a little puzzling and calls for an explanation. It appears to me that Bhāsa selected Vasantaka as the name of the Vidūṣaka associated with Udayana. This name is found in *Kathāsaritsāgara* also. And since both his plays, SV. and Pratijñā., are Udayana plays, he used the same name of the Vidūṣaka in them. A similar consideration must have weighed with Harṣa. The name of Udayana's Vidūṣaka, Vasantaka, was handed down in tradition hailing at least from Bhāsa. So when Harṣa came to write his Priya. and Ratnā., with Udayana as the hero, he made use of the identical name in both the

bear the name Vasantaka. None of the other names are to be found in the Sanskrit dramas.

But the names given by the theorists indicate three things: a certain connection with the spring season or a flower; with the Brahmin caste; and with a physical peculiarity. The first, especially the name Vasantaka, possibly indicates the association of the Vidūṣaka with festive celebrations. Harṣa actually shows the Vidūṣaka in *Ratnāvalī* joining the celebration of the spring festival and adding to the hilarous laughter by his comic dancing.[7] The Vidūṣaka, as already noticed, was inevitably a popular comic figure in the social life; the theorists or the dramatists must have probably picked up the name from this popular and social association of the Vidūṣaka; and it is, thus, an indirect testimony to one of the contributory factors that moulded the character of the Vidūṣaka.

The other type of names indicates a Brāhmaṇa. Sāgaranandin says that the names of the Brahmin associates of the king like the Vidūṣaka, minister, charioteer and chamberlain, should be formed by the use of the derivative suffix meaning 'the son of'.[8] Some of the proper names to be found in the Sanskrit dramas do indicate the Brahmin caste; these are: Maitreya,[9] Gautama,[10] Ātreya,[11] Cārāyaṇa,[12] Vaikhānasa,[13]

plays. The puzzle of an identical name for four Vidūṣakas has, therefore, to be explained by assuming an identical character associated with an identical hero.

[7] Cf. Ratnā., act I.

[8] Cf. तद्धितापत्यविहितैः प्रत्ययैः ब्राह्मणादयः ।
राज्ञो विदूषकामात्यसूतकञ्चुकिनस्तथा ॥
NLRK. ll. 2205-2206, (p. 92).

[9] In Mṛc.

[10] In Mālavikā.

[11] In Nāgā.

[12] In Viddha.

[13] In Kaumudī. The name suggests a hermit; but it is indicative of only the Brahmin caste.

Baudhāyana,[14] and Sāṅkhyāyana.[15] However, the Vidūṣaka is tacitly assumed to be a Brāhmaṇa and that is why, the name indicative of the caste does not appear to be an important factor with all the dramatists.

The third type of name, Kāpileya, may suggest the 'brown' monkey-like appearance of the Vidūṣaka. And though this particular name is not found, Rājaśekhara has Kapiñjala,[16] which suggests the same thing. This should mean that apart from the spring festivity and Brahmin caste, there was a third factor, that of the appearance of the Vidūṣaka, which could supply the proper name. Significant in this connection are[17] the names Māṇavaka, which Kālidāsa uses, and Mahodara, which Mahādeva adopts; the formes indicates a dwarfish figure; the second, a pot-bellied person. Then, it is easy to pass from physical deformity to mental defect; Kālidāsa's Māḍhavya indicates an idiot.[18]

A final variation of a slightly different type is the reference to a mental quality of the Vidūṣaka, which the theorists have not mentioned but which the dramatists have introduced. Bhāsa

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[14] In Caṇḍa. of Kṣemīśvara.

[15] In *Ratimanmatha* of Paṇḍita Jagannātha.

[16] In Karpūra.

[17] In Vik. and in Adbhuta., respectively.

The name 'माणवक' is explained as 'न्हस्व: मानव:' or, 'मनोरपत्यं कुत्सितं माणव:, अनुकम्पित: माणव: माणवक:'. For the change of न to ण read: अपत्ये कुत्सिते मूढे मनोरौत्सर्गिक: स्मृत: । नकारस्य च मूर्धन्यस्तेन सिध्यति माणव: ॥ Patañjali on Pāṇini IV. i. 161.

It is significant that Duṣyanta refers to Māḍhavya as Māṇavaka (Cf. केनात्तगन्ध: माणवक: ।, Śāk. VI); the appellation suggests here a 'pitiable fellow'.

[18] In Śāk.

The Vidūṣaka himself confesses that he has the intelligence of a clodpated fool (Cf. मए वि मिप्पिण्डबुद्धिणा तह एव्व गहीदं । Act VI. 8.[27]).

and Śūdraka have Santuṣṭa and Maitreya; and these names indicate a contented and a devoted companion of the hero.[19]

The rule about the name of the Vidūṣaka is really speaking unimportant. And yet, what must have led the theorists to prescribe the rule was probably the conventional nature of this dramatic character, which could be naturally suggested by an appropriately symbolical name.

The divergence between theory and practice, however, though again unimportant, is surprising. The later theorists certainly must have been aware of the classical plays. How did they fail to notice the deviations, at least in the plays of Kālidāsa? It appears that they possibly had some other minor but currently popular plays before them on which they drew for their rule, and which plays are now lost to us; or, what appears to be more likely is that, they were prescribing a mechanical rule, relying more on the prevailing tradition than on a study of the available dramatic literature.

Whatever the proper name of the Vidūṣaka, it occurs only in the spoken dialogue. The dramatists refer in their writings to this character always by the general name Vidūṣaka, as they refer to the hero by the name Rājā. This is undoubtedly indicative of fixed character-types; and, consequently, of the prevailing form of drama. Most of the Sanskrit plays are court comedies; and so, the 'king' and 'jester' are invariably associated with them. The form appears to have assumed such a fixed character that the dramatists did not find it necessary to mention the 'hero' and his 'companion' by their real names, except in actual conversation. It is only in the mythological, epic and social plays that the hero is mentioned by his real name. But even here, when the Vidūṣaka can be

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[19] 'सन्तुष्ट' obviously means 'contented'. And मैत्रेय may be explained as मित्रे साधुः मैत्रेयः, 'one who is well-disposed towards a friend', therefore, a real and sincere friend.

legitimately provided, as in the social play of the *Prakaraṇa* type, and the legendary play with a social background, the Vidūṣaka is mentioned by the general name only.[20]

There appears to be some doubt regarding the correct explanation of this general name, Vidūṣaka. Keith took it to mean 'one given to abuse' and connected the Vidūṣaka thereby to the Brahmacārin of the Mahāvrata[21]. It has been explained that this cannot be correct.

Another attempt to explain the name has been made on the assumption that the Vidūṣaka "represents a caricature of the learned Purohita who was the sole adviser of the king in almost all home-affairs", and by taking "the Prakritic basis of his name" as a good proof for his being a popular creation. The name is thus explained: "The name Vidūṣakaḥ is just a hyper-Sanskritic back-formation of Prakrit *viuso* or *viusao* (with *k*-suffix) which is to be connected with *vidvas.*"[22]

It is very difficult to accept that the Vidūṣaka is a caricature of the Purohita. The Vidūṣaka may hold the Brahmin caste to ridicule; but there are many other persons, like the king himself, the king's officers, the courtesans and maids whom he makes targets for his fun, and who do not belong to the Brahmin caste. If the Vidūṣaka, therefore, caricatured his own class, it is in a general way that he did so. There is no particular *type* of Brahmin that is the basis of the Vidūṣaka's fun. And if at all it occasionally were, it is the Śrotriya rather than the Purohita who could have been a fitter subject for comic expo-

[20] See Mṛc. Of the legendary play the illustrations are Avi. of Bhāsa, Vik. and Śāk. of Kālidāsa and so on. The exception is a late Rāma drama, *Adbhutadarpaṇa*, where the Vidūṣaka is mentioned by his character name.

[21] Sk. Dr., p. 39.

[22] Dr. A. N. Upadhye, *Candralekhā* (Bharatiya Vidya Series, Vol. 6 ; Bombay, 1945) ; Introduction, pp. 26-27.

sure. The boast about learning, the daily routine of ablution and recitation of sacred texts, the love of food and cowardice, are characteristics to be associated with a Śrotriya. The Purohita was no doubt a learned Brahmin; but his capability and wisdom lay in quite another sphere. The Purohita was not required to win royal favour and presents of Swastivācana by parading his learning. He held an important post mainly as a Counsellor on military and political matters; and since it is on record that the Purohita accompanied the king on his campaigns, a trait like cowardice which is generally associated with the Vidūṣaka is inconceivable in the case of the Purohita. What is there in the Purohita then that can be comically represented? Finally, the fact that dramatists like Kālidāsa and Vijayabhaṭṭārikā put both the Purohita and the Vidūṣaka in one and the same play,[23] should have been a warning against such an assumption. For, artistically it is not possible that the original and the caricature could exist side by side on the stage, except if the caricature were of a very broad type representing the general class.

It appears that the term Purohita came to denote only an 'officiating or family priest' in later days and lost its connection with active political affairs. Brahmin priests came to be appointed in royal families; they were called Purohita; sometimes, it may be presumed, they performed the function of managing the religious affairs of the king as well as of advising and entertaining the king. It is in this way that we can understand how Rājaśekhara's Vidūṣaka acts as an officiating priest at the wedding of the hero in *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*, and how Mahodara in *Adbhutadarpaṇa*, who is a family-priest, is appointed by Rāvaṇa as a 'minister of love-affairs'. It is a combination of two roles in one person. One is not a caricature of the other.

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[23] In Śāk., for instance. The play *Kaumudīmahotsava* of Queen Vijayabhaṭṭārikā has the Vidūṣaka and the Purohita present in a single identical scene in the fifth act.

That the Vidūṣaka happens to be a Brahmin and speaks in Prakrit are questions which, as a matter of fact, need not be mixed up with the explanation of the name. A separate explanation of those questions can be very plausibly furnished.[24] An explanation of this nature, it is true, can be very helpful and suggestive. But to regard it as a positive proof for the origin of this dramatic character is apt to be hasty, unless there were independent corroborative evidence to prove the same.

Hence, it appears to me quite unnecessary to look upon the name Vidūṣaka as a back-formation from Prakrit, although it may be philologically possible. But I suspect an anachronism here. The recent studies tend to prove that the Sanskrit drama originally must have been in Sanskrit, and it gradually made increasing use of the Prakrit which was fast becoming the spoken language of the general mass of people. The Vidūṣaka in the original plays could not have but spoken in Sanskrit; and this is proved by the character of the Vidūṣaka in the Javanese drama which is an adaptation from the Indian drama.[25] Further, the name Vidūṣaka appears in *Paumacariya* as Vidūsaga,[26] where it is obviously a Prakritisation from the original Sanskrit. But the *Kathāsaritsāgara* has a story of a Brahmin, whose name is Vidūṣaka, and who is represented as a very courageous, obliging and noble Brahmin.[27] This is at least an indication that the name Vidūṣaka has, socially speaking, no connotation of a stupid Brahmin boasting of his uncertain learning or of the privileges of his caste.

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[24] See Chapters IV and VI, entitled CASTE and LANGUAGE. See also Ch. II.

[25] See note (34) and (35) to Ch. I.

[26] *Paumacariya*, I. 19. See Note (29) to Ch. III.

[27] Kathā., Lāvāṇaka Laṁbaka III, Taraṅga iv. See esp. vv. 109-110:

रटत्सु तेषु तत्रैको निर्जगाम ततो मठात्।
विदूषकाख्यो गुणवान् धुर्यः सत्त्ववतां द्विजः॥
यो युवा बाहुशाली च तपसाराध्य पावकम्।
प्राप खड्गोत्तमं तस्माद् ध्यातमात्रोपगामिनम्॥

The explanation of the name must, therefore, be sought not in a social context but in the context of the drama only.

In the particular item of the *Pūrvaraṅga* known as *Trigata* (literally, the talk of the three, the three being, the Sūtradhāra, his Assistant and the Vidūṣaka), the Vidūṣaka holds conversation with the Assistant, which Bharata describes as '*Vidūṣaka-vidūṣitaḥ.*'[28] M. Ghosh translates this as 'The jester who finds fault (with his words)...'.[29] An alternative reading is '*virūpitaḥ*', which should mean 'spoiled'. Obviously, the explanation of the name is suggested here. The word is to be derived from the root '*dūṣ*' with the preposition '*vi*': *dūṣ* has the sense of 'to blame, find fault with, spoil'. This nature is attributed to the *actor* Vidūṣaka because he turns the entire conversation into a different key and evokes a smile from the Sūtradhāra: In other words, the fault-finding etc. is intended only for laughter; and this particular *humorous mode*, that the Vidūṣaka adopts for his speech is what is denoted by the preposition *vi*, which thus means *viśeṣeṇa*. The word *Vidūṣaka*, therefore, means, 'one who has a characteristic mode of fault-finding, or spoiling, with a view to evoking laughter'; and this fits with the role that the Vidūṣaka is expected to play in the *Pūrvaraṅga*.

In the play itself, the speech and action of the Vidūṣaka have the same characteristic mode and purpose. Among the later theorists, Rāmacandra[30] tells us that, "The Vidūṣakas are

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28 पारिपार्श्विकसंलापो विदूषकविदूषितः । (v. l. विरूपितः)
स्थापितः सूत्रधारेण त्रिगतं संप्रयुज्यते ॥

NS. GOS, V. 141; not found in KM and KSS.

29 M. Ghosh's translation is, "In the Three Men's Talk an Assistant talks with the Jester who finds fault with his words which are, [however] supported by the Director."—*The Nāṭya-śāstra*, p. 94.

30 Read: एषां वियोगिनां विप्रलम्भशृङ्गारवतामौचित्यानतिक्रमेण लिङ्ग्यादयो यथासंभवं सन्धिं विग्रहेण विग्रहं सन्धिना च विशेषेण दूषयन्ति विनाशयन्ति, विप्रलम्भं तु विनोददानेन विस्मारयन्तीति विदूषकाः ।

ND. GOS, Comm. on IV. 168, (p. 199).

so called because the ascetic and other types of them, *spoil* peace by conflicts, conflict by peace, *in a particular manner*, as the occasion demands, in the case of heroes in separation of love and when they are alone ; that is, they *remove* them (*viz.* peace and conflict) ; the separation, however, they *cause to be forgotten* by affording diversion. " Rāmacandra thus confirms the etymological explanation, '*Viśeṣeṇa dūṣayanti....iti Vidūṣakāḥ*' and his paraphrase of *dūṣayanti* by *vināśayanti* and *vismārayanti*, lays bare the purpose of the Vidūṣaka's speech, which is satirising any situation with a view to evoking laughter or providing diversion. He is not a mere *Dūṣaka*, a fault-finder ; he does it in his characteristic humorous manner, *viśeṣeṇa* ; and hence, the name.

Socially speaking, the role of the Vidūṣaka is critical. The author of the *Kāmasūtra* informs that the Vidūṣaka, as a companion of the Courtesan and the Nāgaraka and enjoying their affection and confidence, criticises their conduct when he finds them going wrong ; and in virtue of this chastising, he is known as the ' Vidūṣaka '. But he is also a sport ; and he moves about in public houses and in literary clubs provoking many-sided laughter ; he is, therefore, known by another name ' Vaihāsika ', the jester.[31]

These explanations leave no doubt about the meaning of the name : The Vidūṣaka is a critic, a jester ; ' a spoiler for fun '. He combines in his role humorous laughter as well as a critical attitude towards the incongruities of life. The root *dūṣ* indicates the latter and the preposition *vi* the former.

[31] Read : ' स च वेश्यां नागरकं वा कंचित् प्रमाद्यन्तं लब्धप्रणयत्वादपवदत इति विदूषकः, क्रीडनत्वाच्च वेश्मे गोष्ठ्यां च विविधेन हासेन चरतीति वैहासिकः, इत्युभयनामा । ' Kā. Sū. Comm. on I. iv. 46. See Note (28) to Ch. II.

VIII

TYPES

Bharata recognises four types of heroes: Dhīroddhata, aggressively solemn: these are the gods; Dhīralalita, gracefully solemn: these are the kings; Dhīrodātta, nobly solemn: these are the ministers and the commander of the army; and Dhīrapraśānta, serenely solemn: these are the Brahmins and the merchants.

Corresponding to the four types of the heroes Bharata contemplates four types of the Vidūṣakas: Liṅgī, an ascetic, with reference to the god; Dvija, Brahmin, with reference to the king; Rājajīvī, an officer in employ of the king, with reference to the minister; and Śiṣya, a pupil, with reference to the Brahmin.[1]

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[1] Cf. अत्र चत्वार एव स्युर्नायकाः परिकीर्तिताः ।
मध्यमोत्तमप्रकृतौ नानालक्षणलक्षिताः ॥
धीरोद्धता धीरललिता धीरोदात्तास्तथैव च ।
धीरप्रशान्तकाश्चैव नायकाः परिकीर्तिताः ॥
देवा धीरोद्धता ज्ञेयाः स्युर्धीरललिता नृपाः ।
सेनापतिरमात्यश्च धीरोदात्तौ प्रकीर्तितौ ॥
धीरप्रशान्ता विज्ञेया ब्राह्मणा वणिजस्तथा ।
एतेषां तु पुनर्ज्ञेयाश्चत्वारस्तु विदूषकाः ॥
लिङ्गी द्विजो राजजीवी शिष्यश्चाति यथाक्रमम् ।
देवक्षितिभृतामात्यब्राह्मणानां प्रयोजयेत् ॥

NS. GOS, XXIV. 16-20.

KM. (XXIV. 5) does not contain the verse mentioning the types of the Vidūṣakas. KSS, XXXIV. 16-20, has all the verses; but the reading 'लिङ्गानि ते वरजबा शिष्टाश्चेति यथाक्रमम् ।' is obviously corrupt. The text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* on the passage is also corrupt: 'यथाक्रममिति क्रमिक्रमौचित्यमत्र यथोचितं योजना, तद्यथा लिङ्गी ऋषिः देवानाम्, द्विजो वीरः सेनापते (?), राजा जीवी (?) राज्ञः, शिष्यो

Among the theorists, Rāmacandra is seen to be repeating the prescription of Bharata. But he explains in his own commentary that, " The Vidūṣaka of the gods should properly be an ascetic ; that of Brahmin, a pupil ; but in the case of the kings he may be any one of the three types, excluding the pupil ; this is true of the merchant and the other type also. "[2]

Śāradātanaya follows Bharata in recognising the four types of heroes and the corresponding four types of Vidūṣakas. But he adds that the exigency of the Sentiment developed in the story may sometimes necessitate a change in the recognised type of the hero.[3] This, I think, is understandable. For, although Śāradātanaya puts the king-hero under the Dhīrodātta type, Bharata recognises him as the Dhīralalita type ; and this is how the king-heroes of the Sanskrit dramas are to be generally found, with an element of *udātta* still present in some of them. Similarly, the minister, who according to Śāradātanaya belongs naturally to the Dhīralalita type, is a Dhīrodātta hero according

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ब्राह्मणस्य ।' (NS, GOS, Vol. III, p. 252). Probably it ought to be, ' द्विजो राज्ञः, वीरः राजाजीवी (च) सेनापतेः (अमात्यस्य च), ' the latter corresponding to the two types mentioned under Dhīrodātta by Bharata. Any way, Bharata's prescription is absolutely clear.

[2] Cf. (i) स्निग्धा धीरोद्धतादीनां यथौचित्यं वियोगिनाम् ।
लिङ्गी द्विजो राजजीवी शिष्याश्चैते विदूषकाः ॥
ND. GOS, (No. XLVIII) IV. 168.

(ii) The Comm. on the above passage reads :
उचितश्च लिङ्गी देवतानाम्, ब्राह्मणस्य शिष्यः, राज्ञां तु शिष्यवर्जास्त्रयः, एवं वणिगादेरपीति ।
Ibid. p. 199.

[3] देवा धीरोद्धता ज्ञेया धीरोदात्ता नृपादयः ।
अमात्यसेनापतयो ललिताश्च स्वभावतः ॥
धीरप्रशान्ता विज्ञेया ब्राह्मणा वणिजश्च ये ।
कथारसवशात्तेऽपि व्यत्यस्ताः स्युः क्वचित्क्वचित् ॥
नायकानामथैतेषां चत्वारः स्युर्विदूषकाः ।
विदूषकस्तु देवानां सत्यवाक्च त्रिकालवित् ॥
BP. GOS (No. XLV), *Adhikāra* IX. ll. 11-14 ; p. 281.

to Bharata; and Bharata's description would certainly fit the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa who is the hero of Bhāsa's *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa.* The Dhīroddhata type which is associated with the gods by the theory is, however, found in the case of a Kṣatriya hero; the examples being Duryodhana in the Bhāsa plays and Bhīma in *Veṇīsaṁhāra.* Obviously therefore, the theory did not intend to provide inviolable rules; and the dramatists could take the liberty of adjusting them according to their dramatic purpose.

However, Śāradātanaya's observation would suggest that similar freedom was permissible in depicting the type of the Vidūṣaka. The opinion of Abhinava cannot be ascertained on this matter, because the text of the commentary on this portion is obviously incorrect.[4] But the rule which Rāmacandra provides is a plain deviation from the prescription of Bharata. Bharata associates only the Brahmin Vidūṣaka with the king-hero, while Rāmacandra allows an ascetic, a Brahmin, or an employee of the king as the Vidūṣakas of the king. It is not possible to determine whether this option has a sanction of the actual dramatic practice behind it; if it were there, the plays where an ascetic or a king's dependent (Rājajīvī) played the part of the king's Vidūṣaka, are lost to us. The Classical dramas, on the contrary, show the king's Vidūṣaka invariably to be a Brahmin and, thus, exemplify the rule of Bharata only.

It must at the same time be admitted that it is not possible to exemplify clearly all the four types of the Vidūṣakas that Bharata has recognised. We have no play with a god as the hero and so the ascetic type of the Vidūṣaka cannot be illustrated. But it may be assumed, as suggested earlier, that Nārada represented this particular type.

Similarly, there is no Senāpati-hero found in the Classical plays. Of the minister-hero, there are, one may assume, only two examples: One is *Mudrārākṣasa;* the hero here is a

[4] See note (1) above.

Brahmin minister; but although there is a Śiṣya attached to Cāṇakya, he is not a Vidūṣaka; there is no comic character in this play. The other is *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* of Bhāsa. The Vidūṣaka in this play is really the king's Vidūṣaka; but since the king does not figure in this play, the Vidūṣaka can be fairly associated with the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa, who is surely the hero of this play. This Vidūṣaka can, with certain plausibility, be described as illustrating the *third*, Rājajīvī type; for, apart from the little buffoonery, Vasantaka in this play acts as a valuable partner in the political plot of Yaugandharāyaṇa, and may, therefore, be looked upon more as a royal officer, like other partners, than as a Brahmin Vidūṣaka of the familiar type. Mādhava, the hero of *Mālatīmādhava*, being the son of a minister, can be regarded as belonging to the amātya type; but Bhavabhūti has provided a Pīṭhamarda, and not a Vidūṣaka, as the companion of this hero.

In the Dhīrapraśānta type, Bharata includes the Brahmins and merchants. A combination of both is to be found in Cārudatta of *Mṛcchakaṭika*, who happens to be a Brahmin-merchant. The Vidūṣaka associated with him is, however, a Brahmin and belongs to the *second* of the four types.

Of Śiṣya type of Vidūṣaka, there is no example available from the Classical plays. This type is to be found, however, in the *Prahasana* plays. *Bhagavadajjukīya* of Bodhāyana, which according to Dr. Winterneitz is nearer to the times of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa, contains the character of a Parivrājaka, Bhagavān; to him is attached a pupil, Śāṇḍilya. The pupil is not represented as a Vidūṣaka. But yet his humour, his wilful avoidance of learning his lessons, his craving for food, his cowardice in mistaking a peacock for a tiger and feigning physical paralysis are all real traits of the usual comic character. Śāṇḍilya can, therefore, be taken as the earliest example available of a Śiṣya Vidūṣaka.[5]

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[5] See: *Bhagavadajjukīya Prahasana*, ed. by P. Anujan

A late *Prahasana, Dhūrtasamāgama*, also shows the type. There is a Brahmin priest by name Asajjātimiśra whose business is to settle disputes, officiate at obsequies and negotiate with courtesans. He is a libertine and likes to make love to other people's wives. He has a pupil Bandhuvañcaka, who is represented as a Vidūṣaka. He is a Śiṣya to match the Guru. He explains to the Guru that commercial business is of no use, because there is trouble and a possibility of losing one's money; agriculture is equally useless, because the trouble about cattle, wealth and operating rules leads to frustration; learning, too, brings no gain as it involves continuous anxiety over death and fatigue of work; the essence of all the three worlds consists, in his opinion, in defrauding people of their money and in the pleasures of gambling![6] However, when Viśvanagara and the Snātaka approach Asajjāti to get their rival claims over the courtesan Anaṅgasenā settled, both the priest and his pupil, the Vidūṣaka, fall a victim to the charms of the harlot. Asajjāti decides to cheat the disputants. He asks them to put down their stakes; and when they have done so, he asks Anaṅgasenā to move to a neutral position. She comes over to the priest's side. Asajjāti then gives his ruling that, since Anaṅgasenā is by his side, she belongs to him, and none of the disputants can lay any claim on her.[7] The Vidūṣaka moves towards Anaṅgasenā

Achan, The Paliyam MSS. Library, Jayantamangalam, 1925; Preface by Dr. Winterneitz. (p. 3).

[6] Cf. *Dhūrtasamāgama*, act ii:

किं वाणिज्जेण कज्जं णिअधणविलअं तं क्खु काअग दुक्खं ।
किं वा कज्जं किसीए पसु-वसु-णिअमाआस-णिक्खदाए ।
किं विज्जाए फलं वा मरणसमसमुप्पण्णचिन्ताउलाए ।
एकं तेल्लोअसारं परधणहरणं जूअकीलासुहं च ॥

[7] Ibid. Read:

नैषा त्वदीया भवतोऽपि नेयं
मत्संनिविष्ठा सुभगा मदीया ।
स्वभेऽपि पूर्वं मयि जातकेलिस्
ततोऽपि हेतोः खलु वल्लभा मे ॥

and whispers to her that the priest is old and has no money; the Snātaka's arrangement is prompted by a desire; hence, she should better avoid their company and seek the fulfilment of her youth in his own (the Vidūṣaka's) company![8] Anaṅgasenā is unable to resist a smile at this spectacle which has turned out to be a 'Farce of the Gathering of Rogues.'[9]

In a Marathi play of this century, called *Vidyāharaṇa*, a comic śiṣya is found. The play is based on the story of the winning of the *Sanjīvanī vidyā* by Kaca, the representative of the gods, from the preceptor of the Asuras. If Śukrācārya can be looked upon as the most important character in this play, he has a pupil, called actually Śiṣyavara, who embodies a typical drunkard; he is a character for humour; but it is doubtful whether he can be described as a Vidūṣaka.

It may be assumed that the four types of the Vidūṣakas were not recognised in a mood of theorising only. Probably there must have been plays that exemplified these prescriptions. Alternatively, it is possible to assume that the theory provided rules of propriety, in case the playwrights wanted to work out variations in depicting the heroes of their plays.

However, the type of drama that came to stay was the Romantic Court Comedy, with the inevitable king as the hero; and hence, the most familiar type of the Vidūṣaka in Sanskrit dramas has been the *second* one, the Dvija, depicted as a Brahmin.

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[8] Ibid. Read:

विदूषकः (अनङ्गसेनामालोक्य जनान्तिकम्)—भो सुन्दरि, एसो मिस्सो वुड्ढो भअवं णिद्धणो सिणादओ इच्छारअणो। ता एदाणं समागमं परिहरिअ अम्हसमागमेण तुह जोव्वणं सफलं मोदु।

[9] Ibid. Cf. 'धूर्तसमागमप्रहसनं संवृत्तम्।'

IX

QUALITIES

Śāradātanaya has listed the qualities connected with the four types of the Vidūṣakas.[1] They are as follows:

> The Vidūṣaka of the gods is a truthful speaker; has knowledge of the past, present and future; knows the specific things that ought to be done and those that ought not to be done; is an expert on judging the pros and cons of an issue; speaks realistically; knows dramatic business, and has an ability for fun and laughter.

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1 १ नायकानामथैतेषां चत्वारः स्युर्विदूषकाः ।
विदूषकस्तु तु देवानां सत्यवाक्च त्रिकालवित् ॥
कृत्याकृत्यविशेषज्ञ ऊहापोहविशारदः ।
यथादृष्टार्थवादी च नाट्यवित् परिहासकः ॥

२ विदूषकस्तु भूपानामग्राम्यपरिहासकः ।
अर्थेषु स्त्रीषु शुद्धश्च देवीपरिजनप्रियः ॥
ईर्ष्याकलहकारी स्यादन्तःपुरचरः सदा ।
नर्मवित् प्रणयक्रोधे देव्याः किञ्चित् प्रसादकः ॥
भूपतेर्भोगिनीनां च मिथः प्रीतिं रतिं तथा ।
कांचिच्च घटयत्येव कांचिद्विघटयत्यपि ॥
विदूषकश्च भूपानामेवमादिगुणो भवेत् ।

३ अश्लीलवाक्च दम्पत्योरपराधं व्यनक्ति च ॥
भक्ष्याभक्ष्यप्रियो नित्यं मर्मस्पृक् नर्म वक्ति च ।
अर्थलाभे प्रीतिदानं रमयत्येव भोगिनीः ॥
परिहासप्रायवाक्यः परिहासकथारुचिः ।
एवमादिरमात्यादेर्विदूषकगुणक्रमः ॥

४ शठो विरूपवेषश्च विरूपाङ्गवचःक्रमः ।
विरूपपरिहासश्च विरूपाभिनयान्वितः ॥
इत्यादिभिर्गुणैर्युक्तो वणिजश्च विदूषकः ॥

BP. GOS, IX. pp. 281-282.

अग्राम्य—those who are not rustic; hence, polished or cultured.
अग्राम्याणां परिहासकः ।

It was suggested that Nārada probably represented this ascetic type of the Vidūṣaka. Nārada does appear as a dramatic character in Bhāsa's *Avimāraka* and *Bālacarita*. He describes himself there as a 'lover of quarrels', 'always creating by various means a melody of tunes from his lute as well as quarrels in the world'.[2] He says, 'I do not find any enjoyment in the eternally quiet heavens after the conflict between the gods and the demons has toned down. During the intervals between the sessions of Vedic study, therefore, I tighten (the strings of) my lute and feuds (among people)'.[3] Nārada is also seen in a late play, *Ratimanmatha*, by Paṇḍita Jagannātha, accompanied by a pupil and watching the fight between Manmatha and Śaṁbūka. He says that he enjoys watching fights between gods and demons, next to devotional utterance of Hari's name. The pupil asks how he occupies himself when this pursuit is not available. Nārada replies that a wordy dispute between devoted couples, greedy children fighting with each other for eatables, or a bull raising his horns and charging in a public square, are his sources of diversion; and he roams the world over watching such spectacles.[4] But in these plays as

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अर्थलाभे—probably in a double sense: He makes a gift of love, that is, helps towards the success of a love affair, if it is materially beneficial to him (अर्थ = द्रव्य); or if it serves some purpose of his own (अर्थ = प्रयोजन).

[2] Avi. VI. 11 cd:
उद्पादयाम्यहरहर्विविधैरुपायै-
स्तन्त्रीषु च स्वरगणान् कलहांश्च लोके ॥

[3] Bāl. I. 4:
क्षीणेषु देवासुरविग्रहेषु
नित्यप्रशान्ते न रमेऽन्तरिक्षे ।
अहं हि वेदाध्ययनान्तरेषु
तन्त्रीश्च वैराणि च घट्टयामि ॥

[4] *Ratimanmatha*, IV. 28:
दम्पत्योरनुरक्तयोरपि मिषात् संपादितं वाक्कलिं
प्रक्रान्तं सहसा नियुद्धमथवा भक्ष्योत्सुकैर्बालकैः ।

also in Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīya*, Nārada does not play the role which he has assigned to himself; he merely comes as a *deux ex machina* to introduce a situation, or tie up the ends of a story. This, however, need not go against the assumption that Nārada could play such a role. In all probability there must have been plays where Nārada was depicted as instigating harmless quarrels and enjoying the whole fun. Some Marathi dramas of the present times do show Nārada in this light.[5] In fact, the description given by Bhāsa clearly presupposes that Nārada had already acquired the particular character which is illustrated from the Purāṇic stories. Śāradātanaya's description, too, would admirably fit Nārada: As a divine sage he carries with him the knowledge of the past, present and future. His truthful and realistic way of speech can be easily understood; as also his ability to distinguish between worthy and unworthy actions and to arrive at a proper judgment. The evidence of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is clear on the important role that Nārada played in the development of drama; and hence, he can be appropriately described as 'Nāṭyavid'. Even the knowledge of the Veda, which Śāradātanaya has associated with the Vidūṣaka elsewhere,[6] is correct in the case of Nārada: Bhāsa describes Nārada as giving pleasure to Brahmā by his recitations of the Vedas.[7] If to these qualities is added the love of quarrels and of fun, which Bhāsa's Nārada attributes to himself, there remains no doubt that Bhāsa, the dramatist, and Śāradātanaya, the theorist, have Nārada in their minds as the typical comic character associated with the gods. This strengthens the earlier inference that Nārada must have been the first of the Vidūṣakas to appear

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उक्ष्णो वाथ चतुष्पथेऽभिपततो योद्धुं विषाणोद्धुरां
पश्यन्निर्वृतमानसोऽनवरतं हिण्डे महीमण्डले ॥

[5] I am referring to *Saubhadra* and *Kṛṣṇārjunayuddha*, particularly.

[6] Cf. 'वेदवित्' BP. GOS, p. 289. ll. 4-5. See Note (21) below.

[7] Avi. VI. 11 a: 'वेदैः पितामहमहं परितोषयामि ।'

in mythological plays based on a personal and domestic life of a god. [8]

> The Vidūṣaka of the king has the ability to make (even) the cultured people laugh; in matters of money and women he is irreproachable and is liked by the maids of the queen; he moves in the harem and instigates (mutual) jealousies and quarrels; he is witty and is able to pacify to some extent the queen angered by love-matters; he stimulates love and enjoyment between the king and his beloved; as sometimes he brings estrangement also. The Vidūṣaka of the kings should possess these and similar qualities.

This is, speaking generally, a fairly accurate description of the Vidūṣaka as he is found in the classical plays. The Vidūṣaka, it will be seen, is always prone to witty observations. That he provokes laughter even among the cultured people is also true: Witness, for instance, how Gautama makes Paṇḍita-Kauśikī laugh, and evokes a smile from Mālavikā in the musical concert. [9] The jokes which the Vidūṣakas cut in the presence of the king, particularly those that are directed against the hero himself, have often the quality of wisdom inspired by the knowledge of the world. That the Vidūṣaka has a free access to the harem is invariably true; he is also liked by the maids, although, in some cases, the maids appear to take advantage of the Vidūṣaka and derive their fun out of him. The Vidūṣaka's role as an instigator of jealousies and quarrels must naturally depend on the dramatic situations actually created in the play; and, hence, it may not be illustrated in every case. Gautama, however, answers the description correctly. He is responsible for setting the two dance-masters against each other; and thereby rousing the anger and jealousy of both the senior queen Dhāriṇī and the younger queen Irāvatī. Vasantaka, too, pro-

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[8] See Ch. II, entitled EVOLUTION...

[9] Mālavikā., act II.

vokes the jealous anger of Vāsavadattā by indicatting his personal preference for the younger queen Padmāvatī.[10] Further, Gautama succeeds to some extent in appeasing the angry queens: Irāvatī, by making the king prostrate himself before her; and Dhāriṇī, by himself playing a hoax on her and thereby demonstrating the futility of her opposition to the king's love-affair. Gautama renders extraordinary help in not only encouraging the king in his love-affair but in successfully bringing it to a close also. Most of the Vidūṣakas provide encouragement to the king, though they are not always able to give active help in matters of love. In a few cases, the opposite also is true: Māṇavaka does not seem to like the king's passion for Urvaśī.[11] Māḍhavya registers plain opposition to Duṣyanta's fancy for Śakuntalā.[12] And Santuṣṭa annoys the hero and the heroine by refusing to leave them in privacy, till he is dragged out of the apartment by the maid.[13] The question which Vasantaka puts to Udayana, asking him to confess his love for one of the two queens, is in the same category; Udayana is unwilling to answer the question as it was bound to cause estrangement in one or the other case.[14] These may be looked upon as instances where the Vidūṣaka is apparently bringing estrangement between the hero and the heroine, or the queen.

The qualities which the Vidūṣaka of the minister should possess are in the following order: He uses obscene expression; reveals the fault of the couple; he loves all kinds of food, prescribed and prohibited; he always touches the weak spots of others and talks wittily; he arranges for the enjoy-

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10 SV., act IV.

11 Vik., act II, interlude; cf. 'णिउणिए विण्णवेहि तत्तभोदिं। जदामि दाव मिअतिण्हिआदो णिवत्तेदुं वअस्सं तदो देवीए मुहं पेक्खिस्सं त्ति।' (II. 49-50).

12 Śāk., act II.

13 Avi., act V.

14 SV., act IV.

ment of pleasure-seeking women by making a gift of love, provided there is some material gain for himself, or alternatively, if it serves some purpose of his own; his utterances are mostly jokular and he likes talk which is full of fun.

The only illustration of this type of the Vidūṣaka is that of Vasantaka in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa*. Vasantaka uses obscene language;[15] he is ready to accept balls of flour prepared in liquor; he exposes the weakness of Udayana in transforming his captivity into an opportunity for courting Vāsavadattā; thus, except for service to pleasure-seeking women, most of the traits are illustrated in this character.

The Vidūṣaka attached to the merchant possesses the following qualities: He is a rogue; his dress, physical appearance and speech are ugly; and equally ugly or uncouth are his jests and gesticulations on the stage.

This prescription would appear to be surprising if Cārudatta were to be taken as the type of merchant-hero. Maitreya certainly does not illustrate these traits; and the ugliness in appearance cannot be assumed to be his exclusive trait because the Sanskrit dramatists have associated this characteristic with all the Vidūṣakas.

Most of the other theorists have contented themselves with enumerating the qualities without connecting them with the particular types of the Vidūṣakas.

Thus, besides the physical appearance of the Vidūṣaka, Bharata has mentioned a few qualities to be found in this character: He is possessed of a ready wit which is perhaps natural with him; he is known by humorous doings and by

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[15] Vasantaka uses a simile of a pig's bladder in describing his breath: 'ही ही बुड्ढो विअ सूअरवत्थी सुक्खादं पव्व उग्गिरामि ।' Pratijñā. III. II.[8–9].

outbursts of humour, with which his speech is endowed.[16]

Rudrabhaṭṭa speaks of the Vidūṣaka in connection with poetical writings. He tells us that the hero in a poetical composition is provided with a Narmasaciva (a humorous counsellor or an associate in sport) who knows how to guard his counsel, is pure, eloquent in speech, attached, witty and capable of appeasing the wrath of an angry lady. He classifies the Narmasaciva into Pīṭhamarda, Viṭa and Vidūṣaka, and distinguishes the last-named as, " prone to sport, evoking laughter by his physique, dress and talk, and fully conversant with his own business[17]."

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[16] NS. KM, XXXV. 25 :
प्रत्युत्पन्नप्रतिभो नर्मकृता नर्मगर्भनिर्भेदैः ।
छेदविभूषितवदनो विदूषको नाम विज्ञेयः ॥
NS. KSS, XXXV. 71 :
प्रकृत्युत्पन्नप्रतिभो नर्मकृता नर्मगर्भनिर्भेद्यः ।
यस्तु विभूषितवचनो विदूषको नाम विज्ञेयः ॥

'कृता' in नर्मकृता should be taken as instr. sing. of कृत्, a noun in the sense of कृति, and connected with विज्ञेयः.

'निर्भेद' probably denotes 'outburst'; 'निर्भेद्य' would mean 'one who is apt to be bursting'; both would suggest humorous outbursts and spontaneous witticisms characteristic of the Vidūṣaka.

'विभूषित°' suggests the idea that the speech of the Vidūṣaka is marked by wit and humour, and hence it is said to be 'decorated'.

'छेद' has been already explained; it means 'stripes' of colour put on the face in the make-up of the character. See, Ch. III, Notes Nos. (6) and (7).

[17] Cf. अथ नर्मसचिवलक्षणम् ।
गूढमन्त्रः शुचिर्वाग्मी भक्तो नर्मविचक्षणः ।
स्यान्नर्मसचिवस्तस्य कुपितस्त्रीप्रसादकः ॥
पीठमर्दो विटश्चापि विदूषक इति त्रिधा ।
स भवेत् प्रथमस्तत्र नायिकानायकानुगः ॥

The author of *Agnipurāṇa* expresses an identical view, describing the Vidūṣaka as one of the hero's ministers of wit in love matters; like them, a follower of the hero, but distinguished from the Pīṭhamarda and Viṭa by his ability to evoke laughter.[18]

Dhanañjaya describes the Vidūṣaka as one among the companions of the hero, playing the role of a jester by evoking laughter and fun.[19]

Sāgaranandin says that the Vidūṣaka is to be identified with the friend and companion of the kings; and is declared as their minister of humour, and has access to the inner apartments.[20]

According to Śāradātanaya, the Vidūṣaka who is ugly in appearance is a witty minister of the hero. He is by nature talkative and rash; loves to instigate quarrels between the hero and his beloved; he is courteous, knows his own business and is

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एकविद्यो विटः प्रोक्तः क्रीडाप्रायो विदूषकः ।
स्ववपुर्वेषभाषाभिर्हास्यकारी च नर्मवित् ॥
(v. l. कर्मवित्, स्वकर्मवित्).

Rudrabhaṭṭa, ST. KM., I. 29-31.

[18] Cf. पीठमर्दो विटश्चैव विदूषक इति त्रयः ।
शृङ्गारे नर्मसचिवा नायकस्यानुनायकाः ॥
पीठमर्दो सम्भलकः श्रीमांस्तद्देशजो विटः ।
विदूषको वैहसिकस्त्वष्टनायकनायिकाः ॥

Agnipurāṇa, Ch. 339, vv. 39-40.

[19] Cf. DR. II. 9: '...हास्यकृच्च विदूषकः ।' The prose Comm. has, 'हास्यकारी विदूषकः, अस्य विकृताकारवेषादित्वं हास्यकारित्वेनैव लभ्यते ।'

[20] Cf. वयस्यकः सहचरः स एव विदूषकः ।
अन्तःपुरचरो राज्ञां नर्मामात्यः प्रकीर्तितः ॥

NLRK. ll. 2199-2200, (p. 92).

Raṅganātha quotes from Sāgara.: Comm. on Vik. II, Nirṇayasāgara Ed. 1914, p. 26. He reads, 'चाटुपटुः' in place of 'सहचरः' above; it would mean, 'talkative and clever', or 'clever in amusing talk'.

always fond of food; he knows all dialectical peculiarities and makes every one laugh; he speaks truth and untruth alike; but he should be wise. In another place Śāradātanaya says that the Vidūṣaka associated with the hero possesses spontaneous wit, knows Veda, is conversant with humour and knows the practical employment of the fourfold humour.[21]

Viśvanātha similarly mentions the Vidūṣaka as one of the companions of the hero in matters of love. He is, like the other companions, devoted (to the hero), expert in witty talks, capable of breaking the pride of angry wives and is pure. He evokes laughter, among other things, by his actions, physical appearance, dress and language; he loves quarrels and knows his business well.[22]

Śiṅga Bhūpāla, likewise, includes the Vidūṣaka along with the Pīṭhamarda, Viṭa and Ceṭa as a helpmate of the hero in the context of love. The qualities of the helpmate that are listed are knowledge of proper time and place, sweetness of spoken

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[21] Cf. BP. GOS, No. XLV, *Adhikāra* VIII :

(i) नेतुः स्यान्नर्मसचिवो विरूपस्तु विदूषकः ।
(l. 6 ; p. 244).

(ii) स्वभावचपलो नेतुः प्रियायाः कलहप्रियः ।
दक्षिणः कार्यविच्चैव सर्वदा भोजनप्रियः ॥
सर्वभाषाविकल्पज्ञः सर्वेषां परिहासकः ।
सत्यासत्यवचोवक्ता पण्डितः स्याद्विदूषकः ॥
(ll. 17-20 ; p. 277).

(iii) तदात्वप्रतिभो नर्मचतुर्भेदप्रयोगवित् ।
वेदविन्नर्मवेदी यो नेतुः स स्याद्विदूषकः ॥
(ll. 4-5 ; p. 289).

[22] Cf. SD. III. 40, 42 :
शृङ्गारेऽस्य सहाया विटचेटविदूषकाद्याः स्युः ।
भक्ता नर्मसु निपुणाः कुपितवधूमानभञ्जनाः शुद्धाः ॥
कुसुमवसन्ताद्यभिधः कर्मवपुर्वेषभाषाद्यैः ।
हास्यकरः कलहरतिर्विदूषकः स्यात्स्वकर्मज्ञः ॥

word, polish of learning, skill in giving encouragement, the ability to report faithfully and of guarding a secret counsel.[23]

It is clear that while Bharata is prescribing here in a general way the most essential quality of the Vidūṣaka, namely, his ability to produce humour, the other theorists seem to have in their minds the Vidūṣaka in a particular context; for, it is in his capacity as a companion of the hero of an erotic comedy that the Vidūṣaka will have an opportunity of displaying some of the qualities developed by the theorists. Moreover, some of the theorists seem to have specific types of the Vidūṣakas in their minds, though they have not mentioned them. It is Rāmacandra who makes a plain statement when he says, in a general way, that the Vidūṣakas associated with the four types of heroes are full of devotion and provide to the heroes an appropriate diversion in their separation from their beloveds.[24]

It will be seen that some of the qualities mentioned in this general enumeration are exemplified in the Sanskrit dramas, but some others are not. The Vidūṣaka's capacity for wit and humour is obviously his distinguishing trait. Real wit certainly presupposes wisdom; in this sense some of the Vidūṣakas at least, like Gautama and Maitreya for instance, can be surely regarded as 'wise'. The 'knowledge of the Veda' has been utilized, however, for fun-making in Sanskrit dramas.

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[23] Cf. RS., TSS, No. L, I. 89; 92b; 93:

(i) अथ शृङ्गारनेतॄणां साहाय्यकरणोचिताः ।
निरूप्यन्ते पीठमर्दविटचेटविदूषकाः ॥

(ii) अथ सहायगुणाः ।
देशकालज्ञता भाषामाधुर्यं च विदग्धता ॥
प्रोत्साहने कुशलता यथोक्तकथनं तथा ।
निगूढमन्त्रतेत्याद्याः सहायानां गुणा मताः ॥

[24] Cf. ND. GOS, IV. 168:
स्निग्धा धीरोद्धतादीनां यथौचित्यं वियोगिनाम् ।
लिङ्गी द्विजो राजजीवी शिष्यश्चैते विदूषकाः ॥
See also *Vivaraṇa*, p. 199.

As companions of the heroes, the Vidūṣakas have a free access to the harem, and their personal conduct with reference to money and women is above reproach. There is no instance where this trust is betrayed, except in a *Prahasana* type of drama.

The Vidūṣakas enjoy the confidence of the heroes, who turn to them with their secrets of love. And if, Gautama blabbers the secret of the king in his sleep, as does Vasantaka in *Priyadarśikā* ; if Māṇavaka loses the love-letter, as Maitreya allows the pot of ornaments to be stolen : these are blunders affected for humorous turn, or for story-development ; and cannot be interpreted as a betrayal of the trust placed by the heroes in the Vidūṣakas.

The 'devotion' of the Vidūṣakas to their heroes has been accepted in all the dramas. The stupidity of a Vidūṣaka will not mar this devotion, nor will a positive blunder ruin it. A Duṣyanta may seek to get the Vidūṣaka out of his way for a personal reason ; or a Jīmūtavāhana may disregard him because he has no use for the Vidūṣaka. But that would not alter the mutual bonds. In fact, some dramatists have thought it worth-while to raise this quality to a level of nobility.

Perhaps Bharata himself presumed this relation between the hero and the Vidūṣaka when he laid down the rule for an appropriate mode of address to be used by them. According to this rule,[25] the Vidūṣaka is to address the king as 'friend' or 'king'; and the king is either to use the name of the Vidūṣaka or call him a 'friend'. This rule is mentioned indirectly by Sāgaranandin,[26] and directly by

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[25] Cf. वयस्य राजन्निति वा भवेद् वाच्यो महीपतिः ॥
विदूषकेण राज्ञी च चेटी च भवतीत्यपि ।
नाम्ना वयस्येत्यपि वा राज्ञा वाच्यो विदूषकः ॥

NS. GOS, XVII. 81b, 82 ; KM, XVII. 80b, 81 ; KSS, XIX. 17b, 18.

[26] Cf. वयस्यकः सहचरः स एव विदूषकः ।
NLRK. l. 2199, p. 92.

Rāmacandra[27] and Śiṅga Bhūpāla[28]. The Sanskrit dramatists not only follow this rule, but assume, as seen above, its psychological implication.

That the Vidūṣaka is talkative is obvious; it is his weapon for producing laughter. And sometimes he is apt to be a little rash. Udayana thinks that Vasantaka is too talkative to be trusted with a confidential confession.[29] Duṣyanta has the same fear about Māḍhavya.[30] The phrase that Kālidāsa has used here is actually found in the writing of Śāradātanaya.[31]

The Vidūṣaka's love of quarrel was illustrated above in the case of Gautama. It appears that some dramatists have utilized situations between the maid and the Vidūṣaka to depict quarrelsome talk for humorous effect. This has been presumed in the case of the Gaṇikā and the Vidūṣaka in Aśvaghoṣa's play. It is particularly noticeable in the plays of Rājaśekhara.

The Vidūṣaka figures in Sanskrit dramas in the context of a love-affair of the king. As a friend and confidant of the royal hero, the Vidūṣaka does attempt to help him and save him from awkward situations, though not always successfully. Viśvanātha's statement that the Vidūṣaka has a capacity for 'breaking the pride of angry wives' will, therefore, have to be understood somewhat metaphorically. Very probably this is the pre-eminent trait of the Pīṭhamarda.[32]

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[27] Cf. मान्यो नामान्तरै राजा लिङ्गिनाऽथ विदूषकैः ।
वयस्योऽप्यधमैर्भर्त्ता लोकैर्देवेति भूपतिः ॥
विदूषकैः पुनर्भूपतिर्वयस्यशब्देन अपिशब्दाद् राजन्शब्देन च ।
वयस्य-सखीत्यादयो मित्राख्याः, ताभिर्विदूषको राज्ञा सम्भाष्यः ।
ND. GOS, IV. 202, and the Comm. on 202-203; pp. 211-212.

[28] Cf. विदूषकेण तु प्रायः सखे राजन् इतीच्छया ।...
RS., TSS, III. 312 a; p. 301.

[29] Cf. SV. act IV: 'भवांस्तु मुखरः ।'

[30] Cf. Śāk. act II. 17.[10]: 'चपलोऽयं बटुः ।'

[31] Cf. BP. VIII. l. 17. See Note (21) above.

[32] Cf. BP., p. 94, l. 5:
'स पीठमर्दो विश्वास्यः कुपितस्त्रीप्रसादकः ।'

This rather elaborate survey is primarily meant for getting a better acquaintance with the character of the Vidūṣaka. Incidentally it serves to demonstrate the agreement between theory and practice and also emphasise the divergence between them. The former, wherever it is found, can be understood on the assumption that either the dramatists followed the theory, or that the theorists based their rules on observed practice. The divergence, however, has to be explained by a number of factors: Probably the theorists prepared a list of qualities which they considered proper to be associated with the character of the Vidūṣaka. And it is possible that the character which they had in mind was not always a dramatic character, but one which could be developed in any poetical writing. Rudrabhaṭṭa, for instance, appears to write with reference to poetic literature in general. It is in this context that some of the traits, like the Vidūṣaka's offering his services to passionate women, or essaying to pacify the anger of married ladies, could be better understood. Probably also, there were literally illustrations; but they are now lost to us.

On the other hand, the dramatists must have taken a certain freedom in creating their characters; while following the theory, therefore, as far as they could, they might have forged new paths also. The nature of the dramatic story and the context of situation or incident developed in the play must have imposed a necessary limitation on writing; and the dramatists, therefore, could associate certain qualities only with their character.

Some of the qualities again are to be associated with the companions of the hero generally, that is to say, with Pīṭhamarda, Viṭa or Ceṭa; they cannot necessarily be the qualities of of the Vidūṣaka alone.

It is obvious, therefore, that all the qualities mentioned by the theorists cannot be expected to be illustrated from each and every character. Neither the dramatists nor the theorists could have hoped to do so.

X

FUNCTION AND ROLE—I

A careful analysis of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* reveals that Bharata assigns to the Vidūṣaka a threefold role, although his chief underlying function remains almost the same.

I TECHNICAL FUNCTION : ACTOR IN PŪRVARAṄGA

In the first place, Bharata regards the Vidūṣaka as an essential member of the dramatic troupe along with the Sūtradhāra and his Assistant. In this capacity the Vidūṣaka plays a necessary part in performing the preliminaries or the *Pūrvaraṅga* before the actual drama starts. The item of the *Pūrvaraṅga* in which the Vidūṣaka takes part is technically known as *Trigata.* As the name itself suggests, the *trigata* consists of a conversation among three persons, the Sūtradhāra, his Assistant and the Vidūṣaka. This *trigata* is the eighteenth among the nineteen items of the *Pūrvaraṅga,* and is presented before the audience. In this the Vidūṣaka suddenly steps on the stage and delivers a discourse consisting mostly of irrelevant narration which evokes a smile from the Sūtradhāra. The Vidūṣaka enters on a controversial topic, makes an abrupt remark, talks enigmatically and asks questions, such as, 'Who is there ?', and 'Who has won ?' and thereby makes allusions to the plot of the composition which is about to be presented. This conversation between the Assistant and the Vidūṣaka in which the Vidūṣaka finds fault with the speech of the Assistant and which the Sūtradhāra finally establishes, is *trigata.*[1]

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[1] NS. GOS, V. 138b-141:
तथा च भारतीभेदे त्रिगतं सम्प्रयोजयेत् ॥ १३८
विदूषकस्त्वेकपदां सूत्रधारस्मितावहाम् ।
असम्बद्धकथाप्रायां कुर्यात् कथनिकां ततः ॥ १३९

This description is rather vague. But it is possible to imagine the procedure involved in this item. The Sūtradhāra has presented the items of dance, music and *nāndī* which are intended partly to do a religious homage and partly to entertain the audience. Now he enters into a conversation with his assistant about the particular play which is to be presented on that day. It is at this moment that the Vidūṣaka steps on the stage, interrupts the conversation with his incoherent and humorous chatter, and starts picking up holes in the speech of the Assistant. It is obvious from the words of Bharata that the Vidūṣaka's chatter is connected with the composition chosen for production (*kāvyaprarūpiṇīm*). In a later play (*Adbhutadarpaṇa*) where the Vidūṣaka appears in the dramatic prologue, he is arguing with the Sūtradhāra himself and protesting against the imposition of a dancing role required to be played on a full belly. But it may be assumed that the Vidūṣaka's criticism in the *trigata* is of a general nature and refers to the particular production of the day. So, the Pāripārśvika would say: 'We are presenting a new play today.' The Vidūṣaka would object: 'Enough! Who is this new fellow whom you have chosen in disregard to the established So-and-so (*kaḥ tiṣṭhati*)?' The Pāripārśvika would reply in *general terms* and speak about the play and its author. The Vidūṣaka would again protest: 'I know! I know what happened last time! Who had to suffer mortification? And who was successful?

वितण्डां गण्डसंयुक्तां नालीकं च प्रयोजयेत् ।
कस्तिष्ठति जितं केनेत्यादिकाव्यप्ररूपिणीम् ॥ १४०
पारिपार्श्विकसंजल्पो विदूषकविदूषितः ।
स्थापितः सूत्रधारेण त्रिगतं सम्प्रयुज्यते ॥ १४१

KM, V. 124-125 (It has only three lines corresponding to 138b, 139 above).
KSS, V. 136-138 (It has upto 140 above; a variant 'नामिकां' occurs instead of 'नालीकं' in 140a).
Ghosh, V. 137-141.
The terms 'गण्ड', 'नालीक' are explained in NS. See KSS, XX. 125-133.

(*jitam kena*) ?' The Sūtradhāra would now intervene, attempt to convince the Vidūṣaka about the quality of the production and express confidence that the play would be liked by the appreciative audience. When the Sūtradhāra has thus 'established' the play, the *trigata* is over.

The item is, therefore, connected with the conversation of the three actors and is vaguely allusive of the play, the playwright and the performance. The Vidūṣaka draws out these allusions by his humorous attack, protest and chatter. The next item is technically known as *prarocanā*, and in it the play and the playwright are directly introduced to the audience by their names ; and the Sūtradhāra solicits the attention of the audience towards the performance by means of an appeal and a compliment.

The purpose and aim of the two items are, therefore, clear : The *prarocanā* contains a direct introduction of the author and his play. But before it is done, the Vidūṣaka makes sly and witty allusions to them in the *trigata*. The Vidūṣaka's humorous manner serves, on the one hand, to elicit laughter from the audience (the Sūtradhāra is himself unable to resist a smile); and, on the other hand, his sly allusions rouse their curiosity also, thereby preparing the ground for the *prarocanā*. The difference between these two items is as follows : Though both are intended as an introduction to the drama proper, the *trigata* performs this function by vague and humorous allusions made by the Vidūṣaka ; the *prarocanā*, on its part, is a straightforward introduction of the author and his work, together with a courteous appeal to the audience for appreciative attention. It may be difficult to appreciate the purpose of these items of *Pūrvaraṅga* in an age of newspapers, advertisements and posters. But in ancient days when such means of publicity were not available, it was the responsibility of the Sūtradhāra and his troupe to acquaint the audience with the preliminary details of the production. It was precisely this function that the *trigata* and the *prarocanā* performed, each in its own way. When this

introduction was over, the *Pūrvaraṅga* ended and the drama commenced.

It appears from the statement of Bharata that the Vidūṣaka necessarily appeared in this humorous part of the preliminary performance.[2] In the next item the Vidūṣaka's appearance was optional. Bharata says that the Sūtradhāra is to perform the *prarocanā* with the help of his wife, Naṭī, or his assistant, Pāripārśvika, or the Vidūṣaka.[3] Abhinava tells us that the Vidūṣaka is really one of the two assistants of the Sūtradhāra; he is only dressed like the Vidūṣaka and uses the language and the manner of the Vidūṣaka.[4] Rāmacandra repeats the same view by saying that the Pāripārśvika himself dressed as Vidūṣaka is the Vidūṣaka.[5] Śāradātanaya says that the Sūtradhāra, the Naṭa, Natī, Pāripārśvika and the remaining actors, together with the Vidūṣaka, are necessary for the business of the drama.[6]

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[2] This is to be gathered from the name *Trigata* given to this item. It could not be 'Three Men's Talk' unless the Vidūṣaka took part in it. Cf. also, NS. GOS, V. 29:

विदूषकः सूत्रधारस्तथा वै पारिपार्श्वकः ।
यत्र कुर्वन्ति सञ्जल्पं तच्चापि त्रिगतं मतम् ॥

[3] NS. GOS, XX. 30-31:

नटी सूत्रधारो वापि पारिपार्श्विक एव वा ।
सूत्रधारेण सहिताः संलापं यत्तु कुर्वते ॥
चित्रैर्वाक्यैः स्वकार्योत्थैर्वीथ्यङ्गैरन्यथापि वा ।
आमुखं तत्तु विज्ञेयं बुधैः प्रस्तावना तु सा ॥

Abhinava's comment on these verses has, 'वा-शब्देन व्यस्तानां नटीप्रभृतीनां सूत्रधारेण सङ्घातमाह । एव-शब्दः सूत्रधारस्यावश्यंभावं दर्शयति ।' NS. GOS, Vol. III., p. 92.

NS. KM, XX. 28-29; KSS, XXII. 28.

[4] Abhinava on NS. V. 29 (GOS, Vol. I, p. 221):
'विदूषक इति । पारिपार्श्विकयोरन्यतरो विदूषकवेषभाषाचारो विदूषकः ।'

[5] ND. (GOS), Comm. on III. 105 (p. 153):
पारिपार्श्विक एव विदूषकवेषधारी विदूषकः ।'

[6] BP. (GOS), Adhikāra X, (p. 287, ll. 18-20):
सूत्रधारः प्रथमतो नटः पश्चात्ततो नटी ॥

The above rule of Bharata is repeated by the author of *Agnipurāṇa,*[7] by Rāmacandra[8] and Viśvanātha,[9] who call this item *Āmukha*. *Agnipurāṇa* identifies it with *Prastāvanā*. Śiṅga Bhūpāla calls it *Sthāpanā*.[10]

This evidence of the theory establishes two facts concerning the dramatic practice: The Vidūṣaka was acknowledged as a member of the dramatic troupe; and he took an essential part in the preliminaries of dramatic representation. This dramatic practice is indirectly corroborated by the prologue of *Mṛcchakaṭika* (and of *Cārudatta*, naturally). The Vidūṣaka is mentioned in this prologue; the opening scene begins with the Vidūṣaka; the Sūtradhāra deliberately switches over to Prakrit and in the course of his talk with his wife, the Naṭī, sets the dramatic theme in action. The prologue of *Mṛcchakaṭika* which generally has puzzled all students of the Sanskrit drama, is

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स पारिपार्श्विकः पश्चात्ततस्ते च कुशीलवाः ।
विदूषकेण सहिता नाट्यकर्मोपयोगिनः ॥

[7] *Agnipurāṇa*, Ch. 338, vv. 11b-13a:

नटी विदूषको वापि पारिपार्श्विक एव वा ॥
सहिताः सूत्रधारेण संलापं यत्र कुर्वते ।
चित्रैर्वाक्यैः स्वकार्योत्थैः प्रस्तुताक्षेपिभिर्मिथः ॥
आमुखं तत्तु विज्ञेयं बुधैः प्रस्तावनापि सा ।

BP. *Adhikāra* VIII. p. 229, ll. 5-9 are practically identical with NS. quoted above.

[8] ND. III. 105 (GOS, p. 153):

विदूषकनटीमार्षैः प्रस्तुताक्षेपि भाषणम् ।
सूत्रधारस्य वक्रोक्तस्पष्टोक्तैर्यत् तदामुखम् ॥

[9] SD. VI. 31-32:

नटी विदूषको वापि पारिपार्श्वक एव वा ।
सूत्रधारेण सहिताः संलापं यत्र कुर्वते ॥
चित्रैर्वाक्यैः स्वकार्योत्थैः प्रस्तुताक्षेपिभिर्मिथः ।
आमुखं तत्तु विज्ञेयं नाम्ना प्रस्तावनापि सा ॥

[10] RS. III. 160 (TSS, p. 272):

सूत्रधारो यत्र नटीविदूषकनटादिभिः ।
संलपन् प्रस्तुतं चार्थमाक्षिपेत् स्थापना हि सा ॥

probably indicative of an older practice, when the preliminaries were performed in the popular manner. As such, the use of Prakrit, the spoken language, and the mention of the Vidūṣaka were regarded as inevitable and natural.

However, the *Pūrvaraṅga* was gradually shedding its elaborate ritual. With the growth of stage plays very elaborate preliminaries must have been looked upon as unnecessarily taxing the patience of the audience. Bharata himself had dropped a realistic hint in this connection,[11] which the players naturally took up.[12] And when the introduction of the author and the play came to be written by the author himself and was included in his own dramatic prologue, the older items of the *Pūrvaraṅga* could not have much scope. That is probably why after the singing of the *Nāndī*, the *Āmukha* that followed did not include the Vidūṣaka always. The option that is provided about the *Āmukha* in the rule given by later theorists has probably to be understood in this way.

This does not, however, mean that the Vidūṣaka absolutely fell out of the *Pūrvaraṅga* in later dramatic practice. He must have continued to appear to do the business of the *trigata* at least in some representations. There is naturally no record of this business, probably because it pertains to the dramatic company; and the dramatists had no reason to record it in their own plays. But we have in *Adbhutadarpaṇa* of Mahādeva an evidence of the Vidūṣaka appearing in the prologue. The Vidūṣaka is an actor

[11] NS. GOS, 165-167a:
कार्यो नातिप्रसङ्गोऽत्र नृत्तगीतविधिं प्रति ।
गीतवाद्ये च नृत्ते च प्रवृत्तेऽतिप्रसङ्गतः ॥
खेदो भवेत् प्रयोक्तॄणां प्रेक्षकाणां तथैव च ।
खिन्नानां रसभावेषु स्पष्टता नोपजायते ॥
ततः शेषप्रयोगस्तु न रागजनको भवेत् ।
KM, V. 146b-148; KSS, V. 160b-162.

[12] Cf. the phrase 'अलमतिविस्तरेण' which invariably marks the opening speech of the Sūtradhāra after the Nāndī is over.

of the name Romanthaka. He is assigned the role of Mahodara, a counsellor in love affairs, attached to Rāvaṇa. The Sūtradhāra has taken care to put him in good humour by feeding him with *modakas*. Yet the Brahmin Vidūṣaka grumbles about the duties of an actor which require him to dance on a full belly. It is when he is assured that he has only a speaking part and that there is sufficient interval before he made his first appearance that he is comforted, and goes away to have a nap.

Similarly, in *Ratimanmatha* of Paṇḍita Jagannātha, when the prologue is nearly over and the Sūtradhāra is about to depart, announcing the dramatic role he is to assume, an actor suddenly steps on the stage and announces that he is taking the role of the Vidūṣaka ; and with this the prologue ends.

The practice is seen also in later native traditions. On the Kerala stage the type of representation known as the Kūṭṭu is presented by the Vidūṣaka. After the preliminaries are over, the Vidūṣaka appears on the third day, and for three days together holds the stage alone expounding his own 'puruṣārthas' in his usual humorous way.[13] Similarly in the popular dramas presented in some Koṅkaṇa villages, it is the Vidūṣaka who takes up the role of the Sūtradhāra or appears as a humorous character in performing the preliminaries. This practice does not appear to be an innovation of later days; it is rather a revival, or a survival, of the older practice; and it confirms Bharata's original conception of the Vidūṣaka being an important partner in dramatic business.

II DRAMATIC FUNCTION : COMPANION OF THE HERO

It is clear that Bharata thought of the Vidūṣaka not only as an actor but as a dramatic character also. While invoking protective blessings on the characters in the drama, Bharata writes:

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[13] See, K. Rama Pisharoti, *Kerala Theatre*, JAU, Vol. III, No. 2, Oct. 1934 (p. 153).

"Iṁdra protects the hero; Saraswatī the heroine; then Oṁkāra, the Vidūṣaka; and the rest of the characters, Hara."[14]

Commenting on these lines Abhinava[15] says that a separate protection is proper to be invoked on the principal characters, and hence Bharata refers to the hero etc. The Vidūṣaka has been mentioned in this connection because he is a necessary character in the representation of laughter and of love. The words of Bharata imply the ten types of dramatic compositions also, the Vidūṣaka being absent in the *Samavakāra* type.

Bharata points out that laughter can arise out of the depiction of love; it is connected with the Rhetorical Sentiment of love.[16] This prescription, together with the friendly mode of address recommended for the Vidūṣaka and the hero,[17] and the types of Vidūṣakas conceived for the types of heroes,[18] have fixed the position of the Vidūṣaka as a companion of the hero in a Romantic Comedy of love, which is the prevailing type of Sanskrit drama.

The later theorists confirm this role of the Vidūṣaka. The

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[14] NS. GOS, I. 96b-97a :
नायकं रक्षतीन्द्रस्तु नायिकां तु सरस्वती ॥
विदूषकमथोङ्कारः शेषास्तु प्रकृतीर्हरः ।
KM, I. 63; KSS, I. 97b-98a; Ghosh, I. 96.

[15] NS. GOS, Vol. I, p. 33 :
'प्रधानपात्राणि पृथग्रक्षणीयानि इत्याह नायकमिति । हास्यशृङ्गाराङ्गत्वाद् विदूषकमित्युक्तम् । अत एव दशरूपप्रयोगसूचनमेतत्, समवकारे विदूषकाभावात् ।'

[16] NS. VI. 44 and 45 :
(i) शृङ्गाराद्धि भवेद् हास्यो...... ।
शृङ्गारानुकृतिर्या तु स हास्यस्तु प्रकीर्तितः ।
KM, KSS, VI. 39, 40.
(ii) *Agnipurāṇa*, Ch. 339, v. 7a : शृङ्गाराद् जायते हासो...... ।
(iii) ND. GOS, Comm. p. 163 : ततः शृङ्गारानुगामित्वाद् हास्यः..... ।

[17] See, Notes Nos. (25), (26), (27), (28) to Chapter IX.

[18] See, Note No. (1) to Chapter VIII.

Agnipurāṇa includes[19] the Vidūṣaka, along with the Pīṭhamarda and the Viṭa among the followers of the hero, and describes them as 'Narma-saciva' in the development of the Sentiment of Love. Sāgaranandin[20] calls the Vidūṣaka a 'Narma-amātya'. According to Rāmacandra,[21] the Vidūṣaka is particularly helpful to the heroes when they are experiencing separation of love. The Vidūṣakas destroy peace by quarrels, and quarrels by reconciliation; and in actual separations they help to relieve the sorrow by providing humorous diversion. Śāradātanaya[22] describes the Vidūṣaka as a 'Kāma-saciva' and as a 'Narma-saciva,' that is to say, as a Minister of Love and a Minister of Humour. Viśvanātha[23] says that the Vidūṣaka is one of the assistants of the hero in the matter of love. Śiṅga Bhūpāla[24] expresses an identical opinion.

The prevailing dramatic practice, as understood from classical Sanskrit plays appears to have fixed the Vidūṣaka mostly as a companion of the royal hero, and, thus, connected with a love-story. There are only a few exceptions, particularly of the *Prakaraṇa* dramas, in which the heroes naturally are not kings,[25] and in one of which the Vidūṣaka is replaced by a Pīṭhamarda.[26] As a companion of the royal hero, the Vidūṣaka performs a two-fold function: assistance in love and diversion in separation.

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[19] See, Note No. (18) to Chapter IX.

[20] See, Note No. (20) to Chapter IX.

[21] See, Note No. (30) to Chapter VII.

[22] BP., *Adhikāra* IV, GOS, p. 93, ll. 21-22:

एते स्युः कामसचिवाः पीठमर्दो विटस्तथा ।
विदूषकश्च सख्यादिपरिवारेण संयुतः ॥

See, also Note No. (21) to Chapter IX.

[23] See, Note No. (22) to Chapter IX.

[24] See, Note No. (23) to Chapter IX.

[25] The well-known examples are Mṛc. and Mālatī.

[26] Makaranda in Bhavabhūti's Mālatī.

(i) Companion in love-intrigue

In the capacity of a king's companion involved in an intrigue of love, the Vidūṣaka appears to play a varied role in Sanskrit dramas:

(a) The Vidūṣaka may positively assist the king in securing the heroine as his bride.

It is only Gautama in *Mālavikāgnimitra* who displays this capacity. The traits of strategy and cleverness of which some theorists speak are truly exemplified in Gautama's character. From the first meeting of the hero and heroine to the final ringing of wedding bells it is Gautama who schemes and plots, overcomes obvious obstacles and meets unexpected impediments with such success that the epithet 'Minister of the Science of Love',[27] which a jealous queen indignantly bestows on him, becomes a true and authentic description of him.

(b) The Vidūṣaka may encourage the hero generally in his pursuit of love.

This is what most of the Vidūṣakas do, as confidants of the hero. They encourage the hero to talk enthusiastically about his beloved; keep him company; and sometimes conduct him to where the beloved is likely to be found; sometimes they endeavour to arrange a meeting too.

Thus, Santuṣṭa supports Avimāraka in his love for Kuraṅgī and even accompanies him in his secret visit to the royal residence. Māḍhavya stimulates discussion about Śakuntalā, giving Duṣyanta an opportunity not only for vindicating his passion but for giving also some of the finest descriptions of the heroine. The Vidūṣakas in the Udayana plays of Harṣa play a similar role. Vasantaka in *Ratnāvalī* conducts Udayana to the plantain-grove, where he first discovers a picture-board and, a little later, meets the heroine.[28] Vasantaka participates in the maid's plot for

[27] Cf. Mālavikā. IV.: इअं इमस्स कामतंतसचिवस्स णीदी ।

[28] Ratnā., act II. Note the stage direction, 'रम्भास्तम्भं चालयित्वा'

arranging a meeting between Udayana and Sāgarikā near the picture-hall, though the plot misfires on account of mistaken identities.[29] Similarly, in *Priyadarśikā*, Vasantaka encourages the king to go forward to ward off the bees; and the king gets an opportunity of embracing Āraṇyikā. There is, again, conspiracy hatched between the Vidūṣaka and the maid whereby the king is able to meet the heroine in the mimic performance. Ātreya in *Nāgānanda* has a genuine reason to persuade the hero to tread the path of love, because the latter is inclined towards an ascetic way of life of which the Vidūṣaka has no use. Cārāyaṇa in *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* guides the king from the Makaranda garden to the pleasure-hill, where the king discovers the sculptured image of the heroine whom he had seen in his dream; and then sees her behind the crystal wall.

(c) The Vidūṣaka may help the hero in appeasing the anger of the queen.

The royal heroes of Sanskrit dramas are generally polygamous. The king's new love-affair, therefore, presents a concurrent problem, that of conciliating the previous wife or wives of the hero. In such awkward situations, the hero turns to the Vidūṣaka for help.

But not all Vidūṣakas are able to help the hero in this delicate predicament. The usual tactics adopted by them are a bluff, a forced jest, side-tracking the issue, or a straight prayer for forgiveness.[30] Even the resourceful Gautama is puzzled when Agnimitra is suddenly caught in a love-intrigue by Irāvatī, and suggests 'taking to heels' as the only possible escape out of the situation. But the Vidūṣakas always wish that the king

[29] Ratnā., act III. See the sarcastic compliment paid by Vāsavadattā's maid to the Vidūṣaka: 'साहु रे अमच्चवसन्तअ साहु। अदिसइदो तुए अमच्चजोअन्धराअणो इमाए संधिविग्गहचिन्ताए।' (Act III, interlude).

[30] Ratnā., Act III. Cf. Vidūṣaka's apology: 'भोदि, महाणुभावा क्खु तुमम्। ता क्खमीअदु दाव एक्को अवराहो पिअवअस्सस्स।'.

should placate their angry wives and urge them to do so.[31] And if Māṇavaka's promise conveyed through the maid to cure the hero of his passion for Urvaśī is not a bluff, it may be looked upon as an attempt to satisfy the jealous queen.

A real opportunity to play the role of an appeaser is presented to the Vidūṣaka in the plays of Kālidāsa only. Gautama breaks skilfully through Dhāriṇī's opposition and meets the indignant threats of Irāvatī with such remarks as tend to embarrass her. Similarly the stupid Māḍhavya is forced to play this role when Duṣyanta sends him to the apartment of Haṁsapadikā to acknowledge her veiled rebuke.

(d) But sometimes the Vidūṣaka may adopt an attitude of protest.

The question of the Vidūṣaka's help either in a pursuit of love, or in appeasing the previous wife of the hero, does not arise in some cases. In *Avimāraka* and *Nāgānanda* the heroes have no first wives. In *Svapnavāsavadatta*, the previous queen Vāsavadattā is supposed to be dead. The wife of Cārudatta is too noble and resigned to present any opposition to her husband's love for Vasantasenā.

The problem in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* is different. Here the Vidūṣaka is a companion of the minister-hero; and hence, he looks upon the love-affair of Udayana as an obstruction to the fulfilment of the minister's vow, and objects to it.

In a few cases, however, the Vidūṣaka expresses disapproval of the hero's passion. Māṇavaka is uncomfortable with the secret of the king's love and is ready, as we have seen, to join the queen's camp. Māḍhavya, too, puts Duṣyanta to a searching examination; and Duṣyanta thinks it wiser to keep him out of the Śakuntalā affair. Maitreya takes every opportunity to wean Cārudatta away from Vasantasenā. Maitreya often talks with her in unflattering terms. These Vidūṣakas appear to get

[31] Cf. Viddha., Act I: 'ता एहि संहुम देवीं पसादेम्ह ।'
See Bilhaṇa's *Karṇasundarī* for similar attitude of the Vidūṣaka.

reconciled only because they find that the hero is too deeply gone in love to be willing to consider their protest.

But in relation to the queen, the Vidūṣakas genuinely wish to remain aloof. Bhāsa's Vasantaka is afraid of Vāsavadattā's temper. Harṣa's Vasantakas have a positive reason to dread the anger of Vāsavadattā ; because in their attempts to arrange a meeting between the king and the heroine they had to court imprisonment for themselves. They, therefore, refuse even to accompany the king for placating the angry queen. Māḍhavya seems to speak for this kind when he describes the royal harem as a terrifying snare ! [32]

(ii) Companion in separation

As a companion of the hero in separation, the Vidūṣaka plays an important role. He soothes the hero's anguish of love and acts as a true comforting friend. He never fails to provide *vinoda* or *vinodana*, by diverting the depressed mind of the hero to pleasanter or lighter things. In this sense, the Vidūṣaka is a friend in need and a friend indeed.

The Sanskrit dramatists have faithfully worked out this role for the Vidūṣaka as conceived or mentioned by the theorists. The Vidūṣaka may not win a bride for the hero ; he may not succeed in appeasing an angry queen ; but he does not fail the hero in relieving the pain of love. The period of courtship is a period of suspense, agony and despair for the hero. In this period, as well as when real separation from the beloved occurs, the hero seeks the company of his amusing friend ; and the Vidūṣaka, too, soothes the nerves of the hero by his humorous nonsense, or by worldly wisdom ; and provides, at least temporarily, a suitable diversion.

A common device found in most of the Sanskrit plays in this connetion is for the Vidūṣaka to take the hero out in the

[32] Cf. Śāk., VI, 22.[16–17] : 'जइ भवं अन्तेउरकूडवागुरादो (v. l. कालकूडादो) मुञ्चीअदि... ।'

privacy of the royal garden. There in the famous Pramadavana, the Vidūṣaka draws the hero's attention to the pleasant atmosphere and scenery, or to the seasonal beauty of the garden. He urges and encourages the hero to talk about the lady of his love. He cracks jokes or makes fun, but keeps up the heart of the hero by soothing prophecies of fulfilment, or by assurances of help—though these latter often turn out to be empty.

Alike in a state of real agony as in the suspense of a love-lorn condition, the Vidūṣaka stands by his royal hero and endeavours to relieve his distress. A Vidūṣaka like Māḍhavya may encourage Duṣyanta to talk about his lost beloved and thus help him to take an enormous load off his mind. And Bhāsa's Vasantaka is prepared to invent a funny situation with a view to amusing Udayana, regale him with a nonsensical tale and offer explanation for the dream-vision.

And whatever may the nature of assistance be that the heroes derive from their jesting companions, there is no doubt about their personal attachment. Hence, the heroes invariably seek the company of their Vidūṣakas in their own distress. Even Duṣyanta, after the consciousness of Śakuntālā's loss has dawned on him, turns to Māḍhavya whom he had deliberately kept out of his love-affair: Avimāraka remembers the touching devotion of Santuṣṭa: Cārudatta calls on Maitreya, a friend in all times, in the most acute moment of his personal tragedy. A real attachment to the hero is a genuine trait of the Vidūṣakas in the Sanskrit dramas.

This 'devotion' is mentioned by some theorists as a trait of the hero's companions,[33] among whom the Vidūṣaka is to be included. But the theorists do not appear to have conceived the height to which the friendly devotion could reach. It is to be remembered that the Vidūṣakas are not all stupid and jesting

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[33] 'भक्त:' Rudrabhaṭṭa, (See, Note (17) to Ch. IX) ST. I. 29; 'भक्ता:', SD. III. 40; 'स्निग्धा:' ND. IV. 168.

companions merely tagged on to the hero: Their pleasure at the good fortune and sorrow at the miserable condition of the hero is not conventional. The instance of the simple Vasantaka in *Ratnāvalī*, and the great portraits of Santuṣṭa and Maitreya prove that the devotion of the Vidūṣaka could reach the sheer level of sublimity; the Vidūṣakas are prepared to die for the sake of their royal companions. This trait of nobility and great humanity is a creation exclusively of the dramatists.

III POPULAR FUNCTION: HUMOUR

Whether the Vidūṣaka assists the Sūtradhāra in executing the preliminaries of the drama, or the hero in his affair of love, the manner in which he does either is that of humour, evoking laughter. Bharata connects the Vidūṣaka with the Sentiment of laughter and endows him with ready wit.[34] He is the 'producer of laughter', as the author of *Agnipurāṇa*[35] says; the 'cause of laughter', as Rāmacandra[36] says; or the 'maker of laughter' as Dhanañjaya, Śāradātanaya and Viśvanātha[37] say. When the theorists speak of the Vidūṣaka as knowing his 'business', they mean by it 'humour'.[38]

The Vidūṣaka is naturally employed wherever humour is

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[34] NS. KM, XXXV. 25, 'प्रत्युत्पन्नप्रतिभो',
KSS, XXXV. 71, 'प्रकृत्युत्पन्नप्रतिभो'.

[35] 'वैहसिकः' *Agnipurāṇa*, Ch. 339, v. 40. Kā. Sū. I. iv. 46, has 'वैहासिकः'.

[36] 'तत्राद्यो विदूषको हास्यनिमित्तं भवति।' Comm. on ND. iv. 167.

[37] 'हास्यकृच्च विदूषकः।' DR. II. 8;
'सर्वेषां परिहासकः।' BP. viii. l. 19, p. 227;
'हास्यकरः' SD. iii. 42;
See also, 'हास्यकारी' ST. i. 31; RS. i. 92.

[38] SD., III. 42, has 'स्वकर्मज्ञः', which is explained in the Comm. as, 'स्वकर्म भोजनादि' (Kane's ed.) and as 'स्वकर्म हास्यादि' (Nirṇayasāgara ed. 1922).
ST. I. 31, has 'कर्मवित्, स्वकर्मवित्, नर्मवित्'.

expected.[39] Bharata recommends that the humour which the Vidūṣaka produces by his bragging (or the disruption which he brings in normal course of things), and by some artifice (like the comic make-up), should always be greeted by the audience with loud laughter.[40].

Bharata provides minute instructions[41] as to the manner in which the actor in his role as a Vidūṣaka may produce laughter. When the Vidūṣaka moves on the stage with simple laughable steps, with feet raised high and put forward, such a gait is marked by three-fold laughter: that which is produced by his physique, that by the dramatic lines assigned to him, and that by his costume and make-up. When the Vidūṣaka makes his appearance on the stage with some physical deformity present in him, or when he walks on the stage like a crane turning his eyes up and down, or takes very long strides, it is the laughter based on the physique.

The laughter based on words is produced when the Vidūṣaka

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[39] BP., X. p. 289, l. 2:
'विदूषकोऽपि सर्वत्र विनोदेषूपयुज्यते ।'.

[40] NS. GOS, XXVII. 8 (identical in KM and KSS):
विदूषकोच्छेदकृतं भवेच्छिल्पकृतं च यत् ।
अतिहास्येन तद्ग्राह्यं प्रेक्षकैर्नित्यमेव तु ॥

KM, XXVII. 8 has 'उच्छेक'. 'उच्छेक' is to be taken in the sense of 'bragging'; cf. Ghosh, p. 512; 'उच्छेद' lit. means 'disruption, destruction'; in the context of humour, it would mean only the 'upsetting' in the normal course of things.

[41] NS. GOS, XII. 137-142, 142-146; KM, XII. 121-124, 125-129; KSS, XIII. 136-140, 141-144; Ghosh, XIII. 137-140, 140-142 (pp. 226-227):

विदूषकस्यापि गतिर्हास्यत्रयविभूषिता ॥ १३७
अङ्गकाव्यकृतं हास्यं हास्यं नेपथ्यजं स्मृतम् ।
दन्तुरः खलतिः कुब्जः खञ्जश्च विकृताननः ॥ १३८
यदीदृशः प्रवेशः स्याद् अङ्गहास्यं तु तद् भवेत् ।
यदा तु बकवद् गच्छेद् उल्लोकितविलोकितैः ॥ १३९
अत्यायतपदत्वाच्च अङ्गहास्यो भवेत्तु सः ।

babbles incoherently, meaninglessly and unnaturally, using obscene or vulgar words.[42]

When the Vidūṣaka appears clad in tattered clothes or barks or skins, and is smeared with black soot (or ink ?), ashes or yellow ochre, it is the laughter of costume and make-up.

Bharata also mentions the poses which the Vidūṣaka should affect to suit different conditions.[43] In his natural gait the Vidūṣaka is to place his crooked stick (*kuṭilaka*) in the left hand and show the *Catura* gesture with the right hand. He is to bend low, by turns, one of his sides, head, hand and foot, in keeping with the rhythm and the musical time (*tāla*). This will be his natural gait. Other than this will be abnormal: for instance, when he is affecting a gait supposed to be resulting from some feeling like that of pride, it will have a quickened rhythm and prolonged time.[44] When he gets an unexpected gift, such as food or garment, he will affect a stunned pose.[45]

The later theorists only paraphrase Bharata's words in des-

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[42] काव्यहास्यं तु विज्ञेयमसम्बद्धप्रभाषणैः ॥ १४०
अनर्थकैर्विकारैश्च तथा चाश्लीलभाषणैः ।
चीरचर्ममषीभस्मगैरिकाद्यैस्तु मण्डितः ॥ १४१
यस्तादृशो भवेद् विप्रो हास्यो नेपथ्यजस्तु सः ।

[43] NS. GOS, XII. 142-146; Ghosh, XIII. 143-146 (p. 227):
गतिप्रचारं विभजेत् नानावस्थान्तरात्मकम् ।
स्वभावजायां विन्यस्य कुटिलं वामके करे ॥ १४३
तथा दक्षिणहस्ते च कुर्याच्चतुरकं पुनः ।
पार्श्वमेकं शिरश्चैव हस्तोऽथ चरणस्तथा ॥ १४४
पर्यायशः संनमयेल्लयतालवशानुगः ।

[44] स्वभावजा तु तस्यैषा गतिरन्या विकारजा ॥ १४५

[45] अलाभलाभाद् भुक्तस्य स्तब्धा तस्य गतिर्भवेत् ।

Abhinava commenting on 'गतिरन्या' (XII. 145-146, GOS, p. 160) says, '**अन्या** द्रुतलयत्वेन प्लुतकालमानाद् बाहुल्येन शोकादिः स्वभावजा । गर्वात्मकोऽपि विकारो भवतीत्याशयेनाह **अलाभलाभादि**ति । अलाभः लाभपूर्वकाङ्क्षाभात् । **भुक्तं** वस्त्राद्युपलक्षयति ।'

cribing the three-fold base of the Vidūṣaka's laughter, namely physique, words, and costume and make-up. These are technically known, in the language of *abhinaya* or acting, as *āṅgika*, *vācika* and *āhārya* respectively. Thus, Rāmacandra [46] says that the Vidūṣaka deliberately moves unevenly or loosely on the stage in order to evoke laughter. Rāmacandra mentions the threefold laughter of the Vidūṣaka arising out of physique, costume and make-up, and words. The laughter of physique, he says, arises if the Vidūṣaka appears as bald-headed, lame, with protruding teeth and deformed face etc. The laughter of dress is due to an extremely loose lower garment that he wears ; but Rāmacandra wrongly includes here the Vidūṣaka's looking up and down, contrary to Bharata's prescription where it is correctly put under the 'laughter of physique'. The laughter of words naturally arises due to inconsistent, meaningless and vulgar talk.

Of the three kinds of laughter, the one based on physique and the other of costume or make-up fall properly within the province of the actor ; and rules for his guidance are appropriately provided in the theory. But the dramatists have brought some details in the course of the actual dialogue. Thus, they mention physical deformities of the Vidūṣaka : the mis-shapen head or bald head, monkey-like face, and dwarfish or crooked figure.[47] They suggest gait and poses which the Vidūṣaka will have to assume in particular situations and which will involve *āṅgika abhinaya* : for instance, while receiving a present of *modakas*, garment or ornaments ; in simulating the act of eating ;[48]

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[46] ND. iii. 103, Comm. p. 152 :

'विदूषकोऽपि च हास्यार्थं बुद्धिपूर्वकमेव विसंस्थुलं विचेष्टते ।'

ND. iv. 167, Comm. p. 199 :

'हास्यं चास्य अङ्गनेपथ्यवचोविकारात् त्रेधा । तत्राङ्गहास्यं खलतिखञ्जदन्तुरविकृताननत्वादिना । नेपथ्यहास्यं अत्यायतमम्बरस्योल्लोकितविलोकितगमनादिना । वचोहास्यमसम्बद्ध-अनर्थक-अश्लीलभाषणादिना भवति ।

[47] See, Chapter III, PERSONAL APPEARANCE etc.

[48] Cf., for instance, Śāk. act II :

राजा—विश्रान्तेन भवता ममाप्येकस्मिन्ननायासे कर्मणि सहायेन भवितव्यम् ।

विदूषकः—किं मोदअखज्जिआए ।

in dozing off in a squatting position;[49] in running away from an imaginary object of fear;[50] in affecting physical paralysis;[51] in expressing loud joy by dancing, clapping of hands or snapping of fingers;[52] in running with the raised stick towards bees, pigeons, or mango-blossom, in a show of anger or heroism;[53] or in striking an attitude of pride.[54] Santuṣṭa feigns to be a female[55] and this would be conveyed, one must imagine, by appropriate gait and gestures.

Ātreya clads himself in a pair of red garments, wears the upper garment as a veil, and goes about like a woman. This can be looked upon both as a laughter of dress and of gait. And if the sacred thread (*Yajñopavīta*) were to be included in the costume of the Vidūṣaka, Gautama's act of binding his finger with it, Vasantaka's swearing by it, and Ātreya's being dragged by it, in which attempt it snaps, may also be put down under *nepathyaja* laughter.

The laughter of words is an author's creation. The Vidūṣaka's speech as such is intended to be full of laughter. But it

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[49] For instance, Gautama in Mālavikā. act IV, and Vasantaka in Priya. act III.

[50] For instance, Vasantaka in SV. act IV is frightened by the rolling garland which he mistakes for a serpent; Māṇavaka, in Vik. act II, mistakes the birch-leaf on which Urvaśī's letter is written to be a slough of serpent.

[51] For instance, Māḍhavya, at the opening of Śāk. act II: अङ्गभङ्गविअलो विअ भविअ चिट्ठिस्सं...।

[52] For instance, Vasantaka in Ratnā.

[53] For instance, Vasantaka in SV., IV, rushing at the bees; Maitreya in Mṛc., V, raising his stick at the pigeons; and, Māḍhavya in Śāk., VI, attacking mango blossoms, imagined as Cupid's arrows.

[54] For instance, Māḍhavya in Śāk., II, while saying, 'तेण हि जुवराओ म्हि दाणिं संवुत्तो ।' or Maitreya in Mṛc., I, while addressing Śakāra, 'भो सके गेहे कुक्कुरो वि दाव चण्डो भोदि किं उण अहं बम्हणो ।'

[55] Avi., act V: 'अहं पुक्खरिणी णाम चेडी ।'

must be remembered that not all the Vidūṣaka's speech is a nonsensical, incoherent and meaningless babble. The classical wit is both sharp and brilliant. Although the laughter of the Vidūṣaka is on a popular level, the classical writers have not allowed it to descend into shallow and vulgar humour. The use of abuse and vulgarity as means of laughter is seen in the decadent period and in the hands of lesser writers.[56] Rājaśekhara, for instance, parades vulgarity; and the later *Prahasanas* stoop to obscenity.

[56] Rājaśekhara both in Karpūra. and Viddha. puts vulgar terms in the mouth of the Vidūṣaka. It is true that Maitreya loses his temper in the court scene, Mṛc. IX; but the occasion is different; Maitreya is unselfish and Śakāra thoroughly deserves the abuse.

XI

FUNCTION AND ROLE—II

Apart from the functions which Bharata assigned to the Vidūṣaka, the dramatists had to devise additional functions for this character. This was inevitable. For, once the Vidūṣaka was accepted in the business of a play as an actor and as a dramatic character, it was natural that he should assume the rôle of a real participant and not appear as a detached instrument for the production of humour. It would be an artistic defect if the Vidūṣaka, even as a conventional character, were not somehow integrated with the structure of the dramatic story and the business of its stage representation. The dramatists naturally had to take this aspect of the character into consideration. The theory, including that propounded by later writers, has, however, failed to record the role and functions assigned by dramatists to the Vidūṣaka.

(1) Choric Function

It is to be expected that the ancient Sanskrit stage could not have provided elaborate or even adequate scenic background to the plays, and that it had to be devised by some other means. Further, the limited use of curtains on the stage was apt to make, on the one hand, the scene-shifts difficult to be understood by the spectators, as, on the other hand, it was likely to confuse the audience about the identity of new characters. The first difficulty the dramatists met by providing elaborate descriptions in the play itself; and for the second, they utilized varied dramatic devices[1] the purpose of which was to introduce the character properly to the audience. This is the real expla-

[1] Sometimes by direct reference to the character who is about to enter on the stage; or, by adopting the technical modes known as चूलिका, अङ्कावतार and अङ्कमुख. See SD. VI. 54-60.

nation of the elaborate descriptions of which Sanskrit dramas are full, and of the structural devices used conventionally in the development of the plot.

The Vidūṣaka is often seen to perform one or both of these functions : describing a change of scene, or introducing the hero whose companion he is.

Vasantaka opens the fourth act of *Svapnavāsavadatta*, where a background is prepared for the appearance of Udayana. The Vidūṣaka sums up certain events which fill the gap between the previous and the opening acts. Later he conducts Udayana to the Pramadavana ; describes the garden, the flowers, and the white cranes flying at the blue sky-line in beautiful formations. Finally, he brings Udayana to the Mādhavī bower where the main scene of the act takes place. In *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* the Vidūṣaka, again, opens the act ; brings a reference to the scene of action ; prepares for the introduction of Yaugandharāyaṇa, the hero of the play ; and narrates events which finally lead to the conclusion of the act. Santuṣṭa, similarly, opens the second act of *Avimāraka* and communicates in his opening speech the background of the hero and his love for the heroine which forms the main theme of the play. Later, he describes the city in the sunset and provides the scenic background. In act IV, he gives information about the disappearance of the hero and thereby adds a necessary link to the development of the story.

Maitreya is actually referred to in the prologue of *Mṛcchakaṭika*. He begins the opening scene of the play, narrates the background of the story and introduces the hero. In the third act, Maitreya's lines indicate passage from the street to the house of Cārudatta and, further, to the inner apartment used as a bed-chamber. The entire description of Vasantasenā's huge house, having seven quadrangles, which occurs in the fourth act, is assigned to the Vidūṣaka. The scene of the fifth act, which is a grove of trees, is indicated by Maitreya. In the same way, he introduces the scene of the seventh act, which is an old

garden called Puṣpakaraṇḍaka. In the final act, he takes Cārudatta's son to the place of slaughter.

Gautama in *Mālavikāgnimitra* arranges for the musical concert and thereby introduces the scene and action of the second act. In the third act, he conducts Agnimitra to the Pramadavana and drops a hint about Irāvatī's proposed appearance. At the opening of the fourth act, he brings news about Mālavikā and, thus, supplies an intermediate link in the development of the story. In the final act, he conveys the news that Mālavikā has been decked in bridal dress. Māṇavaka in *Vikramorvaśīya* opens the second act and, in the interlude, gives the news of the hero's love-affair. In the third act, he conducts the hero to the terrace of the Jewel palace, describes the rising moon and, thus, supplies information about the scene and time of action. He opens the fifth act; and, in the opening speech, he sums up the intermediate events; introduces the hero, and indicates the scene, which is a royal tent near the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Māḍhavya in *Śākuntala* opens the second act, describes the hunting expedition of Duṣyanta, and introduces the hero and his love-affair. At the beginning of the fifth act, he acquaints the hero and the audience with the song which queen Haṁsapadikā is singing. In the sixth act, he brings Duṣyanta to the Mādhavī bower in Pramadavana.

The Vidūṣaka in *Priyadarśikā* opens the second act. He introduces the king and describes the 'shower-house' garden, which is the scene of action. He draws the king's attention to the heroine who is gathering lotuses, and, a little later, asks him to move up to her. In the third act, he gives news of the king's love and, in his search for the heroine, introduces the scene of action. In the first act of *Ratnāvalī*, the Vidūṣaka introduces the description of Cupid's festival and of the Makaranda garden. In the second act, he conveys the news of the magic blossoms that have appeared on the king's favourite creeper; and introduces both the hero and the scene. In the following dialogue is suggested the ramble in the garden culminating at

the Kadalīgriha, where the hero meets the heroine. In the third act, the Vidūṣaka suggests a new phase of development in the story; he describes evening and, thereby, indicates the time of action; a little later, he brings in Sāgarikā (who, however, happens to be the queen in disguise). The Vidūṣaka further appears in the interlude of the fourth act, where intermediate links of the story are supplied. Ātreya in *Nāgānanda* indicates the background of the hero and, in his description, mentions the Malaya breeze, the tapovana and the temple, indicating the changing scene of action. In the second act, he brings the hero to the sandal bower and to the moon-stone slab. In the third act, he refers to the Kusumākara garden, where the action of this act takes place.

Cārāyaṇa in *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* performs similar function. His descriptions of the Makaranda garden, the pleasure-mount and the sculptured pillars supply the scenic background in the first act. In the second act, he refers to the playing with a ball, and to the evening time, when the act closes. In the third act, he joins the hero in describing the moonlight; and in the fourth, he mentions day-break.

These functions which the Vidūṣaka is seen to perform, in the Sanskrit plays, belong, really speaking, not to the dramatic character but to, what is called in Greek drama as, the chorus; that is to say, to the actor who stands a little aloof from the story and supplies the necessary information about the character, events, scenic background or time of the action, to enable the audience to visualise connected development of the story. It may, therefore, be described as *choric* function. And it is, incidentally, an indication that the Vidūṣaka moved on the stage in a dual role, as an actor and as a character in the drama. It appears, therefore, that the curtailing of the *Pūrvaraṅga* could not suppress the role of the *actor* Vidūṣaka, at least in the Romantic Comedy.

(2) Mechanical Function

The Vidūṣaka as a minor character has often to perform some minor functions in the drama. These usually take the form of conveying a piece of news or a message. This is natural; because, as a personal friend of the king, the Vidūṣaka is a kind of a link between the hero and the harem. Sometimes, the Vidūṣaka performs this kind of function on his own, particularly when, by bringing a news or carrying a message, he is supplying a link in the development of the story. But sometimes, such functions are assigned to him. Thus, Vasantaka in *Svapnavāsavadatta* is asked by a maid to convey the news of Padmāvatī's headache to Udayana and bring him to the Samudragriha.[2] Maitreya in *Mṛcchakaṭika* carries the jasmine-scented garment presented to Cārudatta by his friend Jūrṇavṛddha.[3] Cārudatta asks Maitreya to place the Bali offerings outside the door.[4] Later, Maitreya takes the Jewel necklace and the ornaments to Vasantasenā.[5] Māṇavaka is asked to keep the love-letter safe.[6]

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[2] SV., act IV, interlude:

पद्मिनिका—अय्य वसन्तअ किं जाणासि तुवं भट्टिदारिआ पदुमावदी सीसवेदणाए दुक्खाविदेत्ति।...तेण हि भट्टिणो णिवेदेहि णं।

विदूषकः—गच्छदु भोदी। जाव अहं वि तत्तहोदो णिवेदइस्सं।

[3] Mṛc., act I; opening scene, Maitreya's speech: 'एसो अ अज्जचारुदत्तस्स पिअवअस्सेण जुण्णवुड्ढेण जादीकुसुमवासिदो पावारओ अणुप्पेसिदो सिध्दीकिददेवकज्जस्स अज्जचारुदत्तस्स उवणेदव्वोत्ति।' This is repeated a little later, and the stage direction reads, 'समर्पयति'.

[4] Mṛc., I. **चारुदत्तः**—गच्छ। त्वमपि चतुष्पथे मातृभ्यो बलिमुपहर।

[5] (i) Mṛc., III. 28.[1]. **चारुदत्तः**—मैत्रेय गच्छ रत्नावलीमादाय वसन्तसेनायाः सकाशम्। वक्तव्या च सा मद्वचनात्...। This task is fulfilled in act IV.

(ii) The reference to ornaments occurs at Mṛc., IX. 29.[3–4]: '**विदूषकः**—पेसिदोम्हि अज्जचारुदत्तेण वसन्तसेणासआसं तहिं अलंकरणाइं गेण्हिअ जधा...। ता समप्पेहि त्ति।'

[6] Vik., II. 14.[2]: '**राजा**—वयस्य, अङ्गुलीस्वेदेन दूष्येरन् अक्षराणि। धार्यतामयं स्वहस्ते निक्षेपः प्रियायाः।' The stage direction for the next speech of the Vidūṣaka is, 'गृहीत्वा'.

Māḍhavya is commissioned by Duṣyanta to take the army back to the Capital.[7] He is sent to Haṁsapadikā's apartment with a message from Duṣyanta.[8] He carries the picture-board to the Meghapraticchanda palace to hide it from queen Vasumatī.[9] The Vidūṣaka in *Ratnāvalī* similarly carries the jewel-garland to the hero.[10] These functions, appropriate to a minor character, may be described as *mechanical* functions.

(3) Function of a Court-jester

The Vidūṣaka, it must be remembered, is not merely a companion of the hero; he partakes the character of a court-jester too, since the hero usually happens to be a king. But the dramatists have invariably woven their themes round a royal love-affair and, hence, there is hardly any scope left for the Vidūṣaka to play the court-jester. It is in the plays of Kālidāsa that we get a fleeting glimpse of this role, when Gautama, for instance, makes fun of the dance masters and instigates a quarrel between them;[11] or when Māḍhavya cracks his joke at the Senāpati of Duṣyanta.[12]

There is a real hint, if not an actual portrayal, of the Vidū-

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[7] Śāk., II. '**राजा**—...अतो भवानितः प्रतिनिवृत्य...तत्रभवतीनां पुत्रकृत्यमनुष्ठातुमर्हसि ।...ननु तपोवनोपरोधः परिहरणीय इति सर्वानानुयात्रिकांस्त्वयैव सह प्रस्थापयामि ।'

[8] Śāk., V. '**राजा**—सखे मद्वचनादुच्यतां हंसपदिका । निपुणमुपलब्धाः स्म इति ।' And after his futile protest, 'गच्छ । नागरिकवृत्त्या संज्ञापयैनाम् ।'

[9] Śāk., VI. '**राजा**—वयस्य, उपस्थिता देवी बहुमानगर्विता च । भवानिमां प्रतिकृतिं रक्षतु ।' **विदूषकः**—अत्ताणं त्ति भणाहि । (चित्रफलकमादायोत्थाय च ।) जइ भवं अन्तेउरकूडवागुरादो मुञ्चीअदि तदो मं मेहप्पडिच्छंदे पासादे सद्दावेहि ।'

[10] Ratnā., act IV. interlude:

सुसंगता—इअं च रअणमाला ताए जीविदणिरासाए अज्जवसन्तअस्स हत्थे पडिवादेसित्ति भणिअ मम हत्थे समप्पिदा । ता गेण्हादु एदं अज्जो ।...

विदूषकः—..अह वा उवणेहि । जेण इमाए ज्जेव्व साअरिआविरहदुक्खिदं पिअवअस्सं विणोदइस्सं ।'

[11] Mālavikā., act I.

[12] Śāk., act II. '**विदूषकः**—अवेहि रे उच्छाअहेतुअ ।...तुमं दाव अडवीदो अडवीं आहिण्डन्तो णरणासिआलोलुअस्स जिण्णरिच्छस्स कस्स वि मुहे पडिस्ससि ।'

ṣaka's role as a Court-jester in the plays of Rājaśekhara. I
Karpūramañjarī the Vidūṣaka leaves the king as a result of
serious and nasty quarrel with a maid. He refuses to return an
advises the king to invest the maid with the Fool's wig an
beard and appoint her in his own place. It is a clear hint of
professional office. The practical joke which the queen's mai
plays upon the Vidūṣaka in *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* and the vulga
revenge he takes on her are similarly indicative of the infamou
private atmosphere of court-life. But the usual dramatic plo
eschewed generally the typical atmosphere of court and thereb
brought a limitation on the role of the Vidūṣaka.

(4) Function in Plot-development

The theorists considered the Vidūṣaka to be a companion o
the hero and assigned to him the function and the role of a help
mate, particularly in a love-affair. Such a function the Vidūṣaka
no doubt, performs. But it would be incorrect to imagine th
all the Vidūṣakas played this role, and in the manner and to th
extent assumed in theory. It would take a *wise* Vidūṣaka t
be of real assistance to the hero. The dramatists, on the con
trary, have portrayed a type of the Vidūṣaka who is himself a
object of jest, rather than being a jester. And this may be o
casionally true in the case of the wise type too ; for, the Vidū
ṣaka, after all, is a comic figure. The Vidūṣaka is often seen t
create difficulties for the hero instead of helping him out
them. What is the place of such a Vidūṣaka in the story
Production of laughter, to be sure. But, if the humour were
appear as an appendage to the story, it was bound to affect th
structure of the play as a work of art. Some of the dramatist
if not the theorists, appear to have realised this difficulty an
have, therefore, utilized the Vidūṣaka for a definite purpose
the plot-development.

Vasantaka in *Svapnavāsavadatta*, for instance, asks Udaya
whom, between Vāsavadattā and Padmāvatī, he loves mo
Later, in the Samudragriha, Udayana asks him to tell a story

beguile his own drowsiness. The question and the story have apparently a humorous effect. The manner in which the question is asked and a reply is forced, is definitely Vidūṣaka-like ;[13] and the tale by its very incoherency produces a comic effect. But it cannot be said that the actions of the Vidūṣaka are intended to produce this effect only. Vasantaka is surely responsible for creating that situation in the Pramadavana where Padmāvatī, Vāsavadattā and the maid are unexpectedly blocked in the Mādhavī bower, and are able to hear the conversation between the king and the Vidūṣaka. Vasantaka's question awakens the memory of Vāsavadattā in Udayana and revives his grief over her supposed death. But Udayana's confession of love for Vāsavadattā brings the necessary solace to her agonised heart. Simultaneously, it results in producing a psychological effect on Padmāvatī, which appears in the form of her headache, and which motivates the development in the following act. Udayana was trying to forget Vāsavadattā and to reconcile himself to his new wife. The question of the Vidūṣaka forces his mind back to his first love. The Vidūṣaka's story told in the Samudragriha has a similar effect. In an atmosphere filled with anxiety for Padmāvatī's indisposition, the Vidūṣaka's reference to Ujjayinī and its famous public baths touches an intimate chord in Udayana's heart and revives the memory about Vāsavadattā. It is quite possible that the vision which Udayana has in his dream may have been inspired by the psychological stimulus supplied by the Vidūṣaka's story. One of the main objectives

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[13] SV., act IV. The Vidūṣaka promises, 'भो सच्चेण सवामि । कस्स वि ण आचक्खिस्सं । एसा सन्दट्ठा मे जीहा ।' He forces Udayana to answer the question, 'किं ण भणादि मम । अणाचक्खिअ इमादो सिळावट्टआदो ण सक्कं एक्कपदं वि गमिदुं । एसो रुद्धो अत्तभवं ।' when Udayana gives a counter-threat, he says, 'पसीददु पसीददु भवं ।'

Udayana himself imitates the same mode to get Vidūṣaka's own answer to the question. And Padmāvatī then observes, 'अय्यउत्तो पि वसन्तओ संवुत्तो ।

See, my edition of SV.

of the play is the restoration of Vāsavadattā to Udayana. In order that this restoration became a real re-union of the loving hearts, it was essential that Udayana's love for Vāsavadattā remained fresh and unwavering; and that Vāsavadattā also got a positive proof of her husband's love. Vasantaka's question and the story achieve this very valuable purpose in the drama. It is the Vidūṣaka's business in the drama to keep the remembrance of Vāsavadattā recurringly alive, like the refrain in a song, both for the hero and for the audience.

The Vidūṣaka in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* is asked to contact Udayana in his captivity and acquaint him with the minister's plot for his release. The Vidūṣaka's report about an unexpected development of a love-affair and his criticism of Udayana's action directly lead to the second vow of the minister, which, as we know, is the real theme of the play.

If Bhāsa has used the guise of the Vidūṣaka to disguise a real dramatic motive for plot-development, some dramatists, it would appear, have utilized the blunders of the Fool for furthering the plot. Thus, Maitreya's babbling in his sleep leads to the stealing of Vasantasenā's ornaments and paves the way for a far-reaching development in the story. Similarly, his second blunder in dropping the ornaments in the court is responsible for clinching the legal issue against Cārudatta and for the final phase of the story.

Kālidāsa appears to have made a deliberate use of the Vidūṣaka's follies for the purpose of plot-development. Even the wise Gautama once dozes off and betrays the king's secret; but that fixes the end of the act as it is. Māṇavaka is duped out of the king's secret by the sly maid; he loses the love-letter entrusted to his care; and both these blunders lead to the development of a hot scene between the king and his queen. Māḍhavya is an idiot. Kālidāsa uses the Vidūṣaka's idiocy for creating opportunities for others for doing their work; and, thus, bringing about certain developments in the story. When

Duṣyanta is caught in a dilemma and finds that he has to disobey either the ascetics or his mother, he sends the Vidūṣaka as his deputy and dismisses his army. The Vidūṣaka accepts Duṣyanta's statement that there is nothing serious about his attraction for Śakuntalā. He is glad that the uncomfortable camp-life has ended for him. He is proud that he will ride at the head of the army as an heir-apparent. Through this stupid behaviour of the Vidūṣaka Kālidāsa suggests that Duṣyanta is childless;[14] and simultaneously succeeds in keeping Duṣyanta unencumbered and free to pursue his love-affair. The dismissal of the Vidūṣaka is, thus, materially helpful in the development of the plot. Later, the Vidūṣaka is despatched to Haṁsapadikā's apartment. He knows that, once he is caught by the queen's maids, there will be no release possible for him 'as for an ascetic caught by the celestial nymphs'. Yet he suffers himself to go away; and his absence during the following scene indirectly helps the repudiation of Śakuntalā. Finally, the Vidūṣaka runs away with the picture-board on getting the news of Vasumatī's arrival and furnishes thereby an opportunity for Mātali for rousing the martial spirit of Duṣyanta that lay dormant under a heavy grief of separation. Thus, it is the stupidity of the Vidūṣaka and his dismissal from the scene of action that bring about material developments in the story of *Śākuntala*.

Harṣa imitates the technique of Kālidāsa. The Viduṣaka's foolish chase of the Sārikā bird, in *Ratnāvalī*, brings the hero into contact with the heroine. And his sleep-talk in *Priya-*

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[14] It was all right for the Vidūṣaka to imagine himself to be a younger brother of the king (राजानुज). But when he calls himself a Prince, an Heir-apparent (युवराज), it is not merely humorous, it is pathetic. It is a subtle but unmistakable suggestion that Duṣyanta was childless. A brotherly relation is only a symbol of affection; and anyone may call himself a king's brother. But to call oneself a king's son is impossible—unless, as in the present case, the king were sonless.

darśikā betrays the secret plot; and it leads to the imprisonment of the heroine and the Vidūṣaka by the queen.

(5) Function of a Critic

The Vidūṣaka often conceals real practical wisdom under the cloak of his foolishness. When it takes the form of playful criticism, the Vidūṣaka assumes the role of a critic, symbolising, as it were, the "conscience of the play". This does not happen very often in Sanskrit drama owing to a twofold limitation: that of the conventional story-pattern, and that of the position of the Vidūṣaka as a companion of the stately hero. But there are a few instances where the Vidūṣaka stands a little detached and makes his intelligent criticism. Vasantaka's criticism of Udayana's love-affair in his captivity comes in this category.[15] The critical role, however, is particularly noticeable in the Vidūṣakas of Kālidāsa. The love intrigues of a polygamous hero are bound to create embarrassing situations. When Agnimitra is caught in one, and when Gautama asks him to run away from the angry queen like a thief caught red-handed,[16] or asks him to raise himself from the prostrate position at the feet of the indignant wife,[17] Gautama surely appears as a critic of the affairs of the royal harem. Māḍhavya's criticism of Duṣyanta's fancy for Śakuntalā, which he compares to a temporary transition from sweet dates to tamarind,[18] is a searching light on the proverbial fickleness of royal love.

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[15] Pratijñā., act III. See esp. the following remarks of the Vidūṣaka: 'किं तदो तदो त्ति। बन्धनं दाणिं पमदवणं संभाविअ पउत्तो राअलीळं कत्तुं।...भो सङ्घआरिणो अणत्थ त्ति ईदिसं एव्व।...भो, दंसिदो सिणेहो। णिव्विट्ठं पुरुसआरं। साहु उज्झिअ णं गच्छामो।'

[16] Mālavikā., act III. '**राजा**—वयस्य का प्रतिपत्तिरत्र। **विदूषकः**—किं अण्णं। जंघाबलं एव्व।'

[17] Mālavikā., act III. 'उठेहि। किदप्पसादोसि।' A similar situation occurs in Vik. act II.

[18] Śāk., act II. 'जह कस्स वि पिण्डखज्जूरेहिं उव्वेजिदस्स तिन्तिणीए अहिलासो भवे, तह इत्थिआरअणपरिभोइणो भवदो इअं अब्भत्थणा।'

Purūravas pulls Urvaśī to share his seat in the presence of the Vidūṣaka and Citralekhā. Māṇavaka's comment, " Has the sun already set for the couple ? "[19] reveals the rashness of the royal hero which, it may be surmised, must have often over-stepped the bounds of decorum. But Maitreya's sphere is not bound by the precincts of the harem. He moves in a larger world and his criticism of men and women, events and manners, is as free and searching as it is wise and delightful. Indeed, if there were a single character who could be truly described as a critic in motley, representing the conscience of the play, it is Maitreya, the Vidūṣaka *par excellence.*

(6) Function of Comic Relief

As a companion of the hero in separation the Vidūṣaka is expected to confort him by providing a diversion. If the Vidūṣaka adopts the mode of laughter for this purpose and does not give practical and wise counsel, the effect is naturally that of comic relief. But the popular form of Sanskrit drama being the Romantic Comedy, the pangs of the hero are often a literary portrait of love in separation (*Vipralaṁbha Śṛṅgāra*) ; and the drama does not reach the height of tragic intensity which is noticed in a real tragedy. A formal Tragedy was by rule eschewed in Sanskrit drama ; and, therefore, in creating the character of the Vidūṣaka, the dramatists devoted their literary effort to the production of laughter only. What is called ' comic relief ', and what provides a psychological equilibrium to an intensity of tragic passion is, therefore, rather rare in Sanskrit drama. It is to be found in a few plays only where the development of the story reaches a real pitch of agony. Thus, in *Svapnavāsavadatta*, the supposed death of Vāsavadattā creates a real tragic situation for Udayana, who is torn between the tearful memory of the first love and the inviting comfort of a new love. The Vidūṣaka's humour in the fourth and the fifth acts of this play works certainly as a psychological relief both for the hero and the

[19] Vik., III. ' कहं इह ज्जेव तुम्हाणं अत्थमिदो सुज्जो ।'

spectators. Maitreya's humour in the first act of *Mṛcchakaṭika* is a necessary balance to the sorrowful picture of Cārudatta's poverty. His foolish talk in the third act serves to lighten momentarily the disastrous consequences of the theft of jewels. And had it not been for his comic appearance and behaviour in the court-scene, the trial of Cārudatta would have been excruciatingly painful. The Vidūṣaka in *Śākuntala* appears first in the second act; and his jests afford a contrast to the delightful and yet serious affair of love, on the one hand; and a balance to a more serious dilemma confronting Duṣyanta, on the other hand. The Vidūṣaka again appears at the beginning of the fifth act; and between the solemn pathos of the parting scene in the fourth act and the intensely tragic scene of repudiation in the fifth act, the suggestion of a comic situation involving the Vidūṣaka serves to maintain the necessary emotional equilibrium. Finally, the jokes of the Vidūṣaka and the beating he suffers off the stage give a relief to the tragic sorrow of Duṣyanta portrayed in the sixth act.

Bhāsa, Śūdraka and Kālidāsa were certainly aware of the principle of comic relief in the midst of tragic situations; and they utilized the character of the Vidūṣaka for fulfilling this artistic function.

XII

THE COMIC SPIRIT

The Vidūṣaka is a comic character and belongs to the type of drama known as Comedy. But although Bharata and other theorists following him have provided, more or less, a full picture of the appearance, dress, conduct and speech of this character, and have described the function which he is supposed to perform, they have not directly inquired into the nature of comic function itself. Nor do we find a theory of comedy here, although the analytical acumen of the Indian theorists led them to a neat formal division of the drama into ten different types. This is not to say that Bharata, to whom we must trace the beginnings of dramatic theory, was unaware of the nature of the comic function. It is, however, necessary to collect the theoretical statements, correct or adjust them where necessary, and supplement them with knowledge derived from modern theories.

Bharata puts the Vidūṣaka in the context of laughter which, according to him, is the supreme function this character is required to perform. And whatever Bharata has to say philosophically about laughter is to be found in his treatment of *Rasa*, in the section devoted to the theoretical discussion of *Hāsyarasa*.[1]

Bharata regards the soul of laughter to be the permanent basic sentiment of laughter that is present in every one of us.[2] This should mean that we laugh because there is an instinctive tendency in us towards laughter. This is true. Man is very often described as a laughing animal. But if it were understood to mean that laughter depends on us, that it is rooted in our instinct or sentiment (as Bharata uses the word), that, in other

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[1] NS. GOS, VI. 56-74; KM, VI-49-61; KSS, VI. 49-61.

[2] Cf. 'अथ हास्यो नाम हासस्थायिभावात्मकः ।'

words, it is subjective, the description will be partially correct. For, laughter as such is a physical act; it has a physiological foundation. But when we laugh, there is 'a demobilization of forces',[3] a liberation of energy. It will be more correct, therefore, to understand that laughter has a double aspect, mental as well as physical—that it is a psycho-physical process.

But even though laughter has a double aspect, will it be correct to say that it depends entirely on us? It could not be that fun is entirely dependent on us and it will cease to be were we not to see it. "If you expect to drive a tack in the carpet,' says Max Eastman, 'and drive your thumb instead, that is funny. You may not be able to see the point, but it is there, and if some one is looking on he will see it and perhaps hope to show it to you, and if he too is disappointed, that will not make the situation any less intrinsically amusing."[4] In fact, every actual situation has its comic aspect. It may or may not be appreciated. However, it exists and is available for appreciation.

If, thus, laughter depends as much on us as on some objective factor outside us, the question is: Why do we laugh? It is not easy to answer this question. We might say that we are amused. But if it is asked, why are we amused? It may not be possible to make a suitable reply. The question may, therefore, be put more simply: When we laugh, we are always laughing *at* something. What is it that we laugh at?

The answer which Bharata gives to this question has to be gathered from his writing on the subject. Bharata, for instance, says that the sentiment of laughter arises from that of love.[5] He connects laughter with the depiction of love in dramatic writing and associates the figure of the Vidūṣaka with the hero

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[3] V. K. Krishna Menon, *A Theory of Laughter*, pp. 15, 27, 40.

[4] Max Eastman, *The Enjoyment of Laughter*, P. 7.

[5] NS. GOS, VI. 44a; KM and KSS, VI. 39a:
'शृङ्गाराद्धि भवेद् हास्यो...।'

of an erotic drama. The dramatic practice, too, as already noticed, shows that the Vidūṣaka and his laughter are to be found in the type of drama which is described as the romantic comedy of love. But it is necessary to recognise a two-fold limitation of Bharata's statement in order to avoid possible errors of omission and commission: First, laughter cannot be associated exclusively with love; and, secondly, depiction of love does not necessarily involve laughter.

Abhinava, commenting on Bharata's statement, brings out this limitation and adds the necessary clarification. It is not *rati* but *ratyābhāsa*, he says, that evokes laughter.[6] What these technical terms mean is this: *Rati* or love is among the permanent instincts of humanity. When a writer describes love as associated with a *proper* subject as, for instance, the love of the hero for the heroine,—of a Cārudatta for a Vasantasenā—the reaction of the audience will never be that of laughter. But when this *rati* is associated with an *improper* subject and becomes thereby *ratyābhāsa*, as when the audience sees Śakāra wooing Vasantasenā, this becomes a source of laughter.

This distinction between a real or proper sentiment and the false or improper sentiment brings us to the second point. Whatever is done which tends to become improper will, thus, become a cause for laughter.[7] And this also means that such impropriety or absurdity is possible in the depiction of every rhetorical sentiment; and so, any *rasa* may, in these circumstances, give rise to laughter.[8] Genuine pathos, for instance, will affect us with sorrow. But if a Vidūṣaka were to cry over the loss of his sweets, or lament because his digestion is ruined, the *karuṇa* becomes *karuṇābhāsa*, and necessarily evokes laughter. A situation of real danger will strike terror in our

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[6] Abhinava on VI. 44a: 'तथाहि—तदाभासत्वेन तदनुकाररूपतया हेतुत्वं शृङ्गारेण सूचितम्।...एवं तदाभासतया प्रकारः शृङ्गारेण सूचितः।'

[7] Ibid. 'अनौचित्यप्रवृत्तिकृतमेव हि हास्यविभावत्वम्...।'

[8] Ibid. 'तच्चानौचित्यं सर्वरसानां विभावानुभावादौ सम्भाव्यते।'

heart. But if we see a Vidūṣaka frightened by the sight of a crooked stick or a rolling garland which he takes to be a serpent, it is *bhayābhāsa* and will immediately give rise to laughter. We have here one important element which is the cause of laughter : **impropriety** or **absurdity.**

Writing about the laughter which is stimulated in the character and which he transmits to others, Bharata mentions the following causes : contrary or incongruous ornaments, conduct, speech, dress and contortions of the body.[9] The significant epithet here is, 'incongruous'. In another context Bharata describes the speech of the Vidūṣaka which evokes laughter as incoherent and non-sensical.[10] Inconsistency or rather incongruity in any form is, thus, the basic cause for laughter. It is the perception of incongruity and the realisation of impropriety or absurdity that evoke laughter in us. Hence does Bharata endow the Vidūṣaka with an ugly or distorted body, incongruous dress and incoherent speech, making the figure a source of inevitable laughter. Bharata further adds that this *Rasa*, laughter, is seen mostly in women and low characters.[11] Women are included here because the convention of Sanskrit drama groups women with the low characters.

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[9] NS. GOS, VI. 58-59 ; KM and KSS, VI 49-50 :

विपरीतालङ्कारैर्विकृताचाराभिधानवेषैश्च ।
विकृतैरङ्गविकारैर्हसतीति रसः स्मृतो हास्यः ॥
विकृताचारैर्वाक्यैरङ्गविकारैश्च विकृतवेषैश्च ।
हासयति जनं यस्मात्तस्माज्ज्ञेयो रसो हास्यः ॥

[10] NS. GOS, V. 139 ; KM, V. 125 ; KSS, V. 137 :
'असम्बद्धकथाप्रायां...'

Also, NS. GOS, XII. 140b-141a ; KM, XII. 123-124 ; KSS, XIII. 139 :

काव्यहास्यं तु विज्ञेयमसम्बद्धप्रभाषणैः ।
अनर्थकैर्विकारैश्च तथा चाश्लीलभाषणैः ॥

[11] NS. GOS, VI. 60a ; KM, KSS, VI. 51 :

स्त्रीनीचप्रकृतावेष भूयिष्ठं दृश्यते रसः ।

So far Bharata is on sure and firm ground. But although he defines laughter and mentions the cause or source of laughter, he does not speak of humour and of comedy in the formal sense. But neither Bharata nor the Indian theory in general, treats drama as comedy and tragedy. The theorists are primarily concerned with *Rasa*, with the rhetorical treatment of the permanent sentiments of humanity, wherein laughter has a place of its own. On the formal side, they devote their attention to the classification of drama into ten major types, the classification being based on the principles of the nature and extent of plot, the kind of hero to be associated with it, and the sentiments which may principally and secondarily be developed in its literary treatment. It is from the employment of laughter as a *rasa* that we are required to determine the comic types in the Sanskrit drama. For a formal theory of humour, therefore, we have to turn to Western authors.

It was indicated that laughter has a subjective or mental aspect and a physical aspect. The idea of humour is connected with the mental aspect. If the physiological reaction that is produced in us on perceiving some kind of incongruity is called *laughter*, the sense in us which enables us to contemplate the incongruity, either in actual life or in art, is to be called *humour*. And *comedy* is the literary or artistic expression of this sense of humour. The word (Humour), thus, means either something within us, as when we speak of a ' man of humour ', or something objective, as in speaking of a comedy as being full of humour.[12] Laughter being only an outward physical expression of humour, modern theory turns on the discussion of the nature and function of humour rather than of laughter, and of the comic which finds expression in art.

There is a theory which traces the origin of humour and its

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[12] See, Stephen Leacock, *Humour and Humanity*, Ch. I, for the etymology of ' humour ' (pp. 15-19) ; and for ' the Nature of Humour '.

physical expression in laughter to the primitive *exultation* of the savage over a fallen foe. " The passion of laughter ", according to Thomas Hobbes, " is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison of the inferiority of others or with our own formerly. " Primitive laughter was a sense of brutal triumph. In the evolution that followed with the progress of civilization, the exultant shout came gradually to be exchanged for a laugh over the appearance of *disaster* where no disaster is, as when an elderly gentleman slips on a banana skin. A further stage in the progressive evolution of the idea of humour occurs when the disaster is reduced to a sort of *misfit,* or distortion of anything out of its true use. The growth of civilization and literature helps to make this misfit or *incongruity* increasingly subtle as they also widen its range. And when the incongruities are connected with a situation or a personality, we get the comic figures and the merriment that surrounds a character. At the end of the scale it is the *incongruity of life itself*... Here humour and its expression pass into the sublimities of literature.[13]

The consistency with which the origin and growth of humour are explained here has appealed to many a thinker. Plato seems to have a similar idea in his mind when he says that, " The pleasure of the ludicrous springs from the sight of another's misfortune, the misfortune, however, being a kind of self-ignorance that is powerless to inflict hurt. A certain malice is here of the essence of comic enjoyment. "[14]

Admirable as this theory is, it may not yet satisfy the modern mind, especially in regard to the element of malice which is considered to be an essential ingredient of humour. We are, for instance, aware of simple and pure laughter, a laughter which is devoid of malice and which nonetheless yields a feeling of enjoyment. But leave aside modern psychologists. Aristotle himself does not appear to be satisfied with this conception of the ludicrous.

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[13] Ibid. See esp. Ch. IX, ' Humour and Sublimity '.

[14] Plato, *Philebus*, 48-50.

Aristotle's definition is as follows : " Comedy is an imitation of characters of a lower type,—not however, in the full sense of the word bad, the ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. "[15]

Modern interpreters take Aristotle's omission of ' malice ' to be significant. It shows, according to them, that the pleasure of the ludicrous is not to be explained ' by the disinterested delight of the primitive man in the infliction of suffering.' Nor is it to be explained ' by the gratified feeling of malignity, softened indeed by civilization. ' Aristotle's phrase " not painful or destructive " means that the comic representation is not painful to the object of laughter ; as an illustration Aristotle refers to " the comic mask which is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain. " The phrase " not destructive " likewise implies a sympathetic attitude on the part of the subject. For Aristotle, the quality that provokes laughter is a certain " ugliness ", a " defect ", or deformity. There is a remarkable coincidence here between the definition of Aristotle and the prescription of Bharata. For, both mention ugliness or deformity as the source of laughter and refer comedy mainly to low characters. However, this quality which refers primarily to the physically ugly, the disproportionate, or the unsymmetrical, must be extended in meaning so as to include ' the frailties, follies and infirmities of human nature, as distinguished from its graver vices or crimes. ' And, further, Aristotle's conception of beauty will justify us in extending the meaning of ' defect or ugliness ' to embrace ' incongruities, absurdities or cross-purposes of life, its blunders and discords, its imperfect correspondences, and adjustments, and that in matters intellectual as well as moral. '[16]

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[15] *The Poetics of Aristotle,* Section v, p. 21 ; Butcher's translation, Fourth ed. 1929.

[16] Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art,* p. 375. See also Dowden : " Alike in the tragic and in the comic there is an incongruity to be found...The comic incongruity...

The discussion so for furnishes an answer to one important question as to the source of laughter, the cause of humour. It is **incongruity,** understood in a broad sense to include everything from the physically incongruous to the intellectually or morally incongruous, that is to say, the incongruities of life itself. If Bharata uses the phrase ' contrary ', if Abhinava explains that the term refers to the quality of ' impropriety ', and if Aristotle uses the expression ' ugly ' or defective, they all mean the same thing: About incongruity as the source of laughter and the cause of humour, there need be no two opinions.

The problem now refers to the inquiry about the nature of the perception of humour, about the elements that enter into appreciation of humour. The problem is real because, as Butcher puts it, " although the ludicrous is always incongruous, yet the incongruous is not always ludicrous. "[17] In other words, there is necessarily some kind of ' transition ' before the incongruous becomes ludicrous and yields comic pleasure.

The incongruous, in the first place, has got to be perceived. And the perception of the incongruous involves the use of *intelligence.* Meredith says that Comedy appeals to the pure intelligence and aims not at our ribs or armpits but at our heads. " People are ready to surrender themselves to witty thumps on the back, breast and sides, all except the head, and it is there that he (the Comic poet) aims."[18] Bergson also lays down that laughter as such appeals only to the intelligence—' to the intelligence pure and simple '.

Intelligence as an essential element of humour may be understood as follows: There are, so to say, two orders, of things in life: The order of things as they are, the historical order, or the

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arises from the disproportion between certain souls of men and even this very ordinary world of ours." *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art,* p. 351.

[17] Butcher, Ibid., p. 376.

[18] George Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy,* p. 8.

order of actuality. Most of us have often felt that there are limitations and imperfections in this order of things. Hence, we create another order of things, the possible order, which is without limitations or imperfections. This is the ideal or the logical order.

When we perceive life we become aware of the discrepancy that exists between these two orders. If we compromise with this discrepancy, feeling that the order of actuality is too powerful to be changed, we are adopting an attitude of tragedy.

But if we rebel against the order of actuality and refuse to accept its defects and limitations, we are adopting the attitude of comedy.

Thus, the perception of the comic is an attitude; and since it is an attitude of rebellion, it is a logical and an intellectual attitude.[19] It is in this sense that we can understand the dictum of Horace Walpole that 'This world is a comedy to those who *think*, a tragedy to those who *feel*'. Dr. Johnson clearly recognised this connection between humour and intelligence when he said, "The size of a man's understanding may be justly measured by his mirth."[20] Meredith goes a little further and postulates not only a subtle penetrating power on the part of the Comic poet, but also a 'corresponding acuteness' on the part of people to be able to appreciate the comic spirit.[21]

The perception of the discrepancy or the incongruity, thus, involves a transition, a change of mood, an attitude. This perception comes in a flash, as it were. A *sudden* recognition of the discrepancy leads to laughter. There is a shock of surprise in the discovery of the incongruity. A cool, deliberate contemplation of the incongruity is a source of serious and reflective

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[19]. James Feibleman, *In Praise of Comedy*, pp. 191 ff.

[20] Quoted in, *A Theory of Laughter*, V. K. Krishna Menon, p. 43.

[21] Meredith, op. cit. p. 8.

writing. But its immediate expression elicits laughter. For such a perception the mind must necessarily be continually alert; it must have a capacity of jumping from object to object.

We have now two essential conditions for humour: The first is our **intellectual attitude** typified by a well-stocked mind. "A strong sense of humour is seen in wisdom." "The wisest man has the richest and liveliest sense of humour."[22] A man who possesses a well-stocked mind apprehends things quickly enough; but this mode of apprehension is rather erratic in the sense that the mind is continually travelling from point to point, shifting its attitude. This is the second condition, which may be described in the words of Goethe as **'a capacity for mental hopping.'**

Apart from the qualities referred to above, the perception of the Comic involves, in the opinion of modern psychologists, a certain **detachment.** This detachment is not an attitude of coldness, aloofness or indifference. It is rather the ability to rise above the immediate absurdities and look at them from a height. Life is full of absurdities. In prepetually living with them we might get angry, feel hatred and contempt, or sink into sadness. Literature, we know, does express these attitudes. But this kind of detachment enables us to feel superior to the disturbing experiences of life; to appreciate the limitations and imperfections which exist, and to extract joy where anger, contempt or sadness might otherwise have been felt. Meredith says, "The laughter of Comedy is impersonal and of unrivalled politeness, nearer a smile; often no more than a smile. It laughs through the mind, for the mind directs it; and it might be called the humour of the mind." Meredith conceives the Comic spirit as 'a Spirit overhead, luminous and watchful, having the sage's brows and the sunny malice of a faun; looking humanely malign and casting an oblique light on humanity, followed by volleys of silvery laughter.'[23]

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[22] V. K. Krishna Menon, *A Theory of Laughter*, p. 47.

[23] Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy*, pp. 88-90.

Such humour is ideal humour and necessarily involves the quality of **sympathy.** From the impassioned exultation of savage laughter to the sympathetic 'silvery' laughter of the modern man, is a long march which civilization alone could accomplish. But the alliance of sympathy with humour has succeeded in affecting the range and meaning of humour. It has enriched humour and broadened the base of its enjoyment. Sympathy directs the humorous perception to the "more serious realities of life. It looks below the surface, it rediscovers the hidden incongruities and deeper discords to which use and wont have deadened our perception. It finds everywhere the material both for laughter and tears; and pathos henceforth becomes the companion of humour." [24] In other words, the alliance of sympathy with humour has made the rise of what is called 'humane Comedy' possible.

These qualities, detachment and sympathy, which some writers insist on as being important conditions of humour, are closely related to the *function* of humour. For Meredith, [25] Comedy is critical and its main use is to teach the world what ails it. 'Philosophers and the Comic poet are of a cousinship in the eye they cast on life.' 'Comedy is the fountain of sound sense.' 'A perception of the comic spirit gives high fellowship.' For, the awareness of deep common-sense which humour engenders binds people together. A cynic shuns company but the humorist will seek it. Meredith, therefore, regards 'sensitiveness to the comic laughter as 'a step in civilization'. And he believes that 'there never will be civilization where Comedy is not possible.' And equally, the test of true Comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.'

Bergson finds the source of incongruity in a person or

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[24]. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, pp. 385-386.

[25] Meredith, op. cit. pp. 30, 28, 91, 93-94, 60 and 88 respectively.

incident out of keeping with our/social mode and habit; some element of rigidity, inelasticity or automatism in a character; some suggestion of the mechanical incrusted on the living..... This is the common groundwork of the socially laughable. And, according to Bergson, "The purpose of the laughter is *corrective*; it asserts instinctively, and without benevolence, the surprise of society that anyone should so isolate himself, and with such unconsciousness of his oddity, from the ordinary responses, the customary give and take, of the community in which he lives." [26] Laughter, thus, acts as a check against a one-sided view of life.

In relating the theoretical discussion to the practice of humour, however, some limits to the conditions of humour appear to be necessary. Such limitation refers to detachment, sympathy and the function of laughter. Meredith and Bergson were no doubt, considering comedy in its sociological aspect. Meredith particularly had the ideal comedy in his mind, the social comedy of Manners, his ideal poet being Molière.[27] It is easy to concede that laughter which does not imply malice, contempt, or anger, and is humane and kindly, is the best type of humour and is a true expression of the fellowship of humanity.

But if humour is a weapon in the hands of the social and moral reformer, as it often is, the laughter it produces will not always be benevolent. In fact, if Meredith thought the laughter of comedy to be impersonal and polite, it will be a very personal and unbenevolent laughter according to the conception of Bergson. For, a humorist who wields his laughter as a corrective may, as occasions demand, hold the absurdities of life up to ridicule, satirise them, lash at them with the vehemence of irony, all with the single purpose of correcting the follies of mankind. In such an attitude, detachment and sympathy may be difficult to be found.

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[26] See, George Gordon, *Shakespearian Comedy* p. 8 for a summary of Bergson's Theory of Laughter.

[27] Meredith, op. cit. p. 26 ff.

Further, is there always a purpose behind the laughter ? A sudden perception of some incongruity or absurdity evokes sometimes a *hearty* laughter, which is neither the humane laughter of the mind nor the deliberately directed laughter of social purpose. Like the social laughter, this kind of hearty laughter is also to be found in humorous writers whose status and authority are beyond dispute. 'The laughter of the heart and mind are so often in Shakespearian Comedy inextricably interfused'.[28] We may not approve of laughter which arises out of a physical incongruity, a practical joke, or pure folly; but it is there, as a matter of fact.

The distinction implied by detachment and sympathy must, therefore, be understood as a qualitative distinction, and used for determining the higher and lower types of comedy. Likewise we must not eschew laughter whose only purpose is amusement. The justification for recognising these limits to the theory is the practice of humorous writers. While a theory of humour should certainly provide qualitative standards, it ought not to limit its range and variety.

Gordon, op. cit. p. 5.

XIII

THE NATURE AND RANGE OF THE VIDŪṢAKA'S HUMOUR

The incongruity, which is the source of laughter, can occur on several levels: physical, physiological, psychological and sociological.[1] A writer can perceive the incongruity on any one of these levels, or on several of them simultaneously.

When it comes to presentation, the writer's attitude will probably determine the form that the incongruity will take and the nature of humour he intends to produce. In this way we may have pure ridicule, caricature, or parody where the incongruity or absurdity is held up as an object of derisive laughter; satire, where malignity may be present; irony, where the object is to sting under a semi-caress; pure comedy, where though you expose, ridicule, or even smack, you are ready to pity and sympathise with the object of humour.[2]

Considered in the context of literary presentation the incongruity may again wear different forms; and thus, we have verbal humour, the humour of situation and the humour of character. This is no attempt at classification; for, the form of humour and the attitude behind it can be so varied and there can be such an inter-mixture that any attempt to reduce humour to well-defined classifiable types may ultimately prove to be useless. But one can understand the variety that humorous presentation can achieve.

The perception of the ludicrous, the discrepant, or the incongruous, in order to be comic, has to be sudden. This naturally makes room for an element of surprise which largely enters into every comic instance. It results in the discovery, says Butcher,

[1] James Feibleman, *In Praise of Comedy*, p. 195.

[2] See, George Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy*, pp. 79-80.

'either of an unexpected resemblance where there was unlikeness, or of an unexpected unlikeness where there was resemblance.'[3] The humorous writer seems to work on two lines: showing the absence of something which is expected; this being done by understatement; and secondly, showing the presence of something where nothing is expected; this being done by over-statement or exaggeration. Of these exaggeration is commoner than understatement, if only because it is much easier to effect. The mode of exaggeration is a favourite device with the humorist and is employed to ridicule current estimations of customs and manners, institutions and personalities, of social and moral values.[4]

The figure of the Vidūṣaka is present in Sanskrit drama, which extends over a period of ten to twelve centuries. And taking the presentation of the several dramatists together, it should be possible to illustrate the types and forms of humour mentioned earlier.

Like Aristotle, Bharata regards ugliness or deformity as basic in a character intended for the production of laughter. Hence his prescription for the appearance of the Vidūṣaka, which the dramatists usually adopt. If Shakespeare shows Falstaff as a monster of flesh, the Vidūṣakas, too, invariably possess a physical deformity of some kind or the other.[5] This is laughter on the physical level.

If under physiological laughter we could include the gesticulations, dress and movements of the Vidūṣaka, Bharata has already thought about it and has provided appropriate rules for effecting such laughter on the stage. The dress which the Vidūṣaka usually wore must itself have been ridiculous. And when sometimes the Vidūṣaka pretended himself to be a woman,

[3] Butcher, *Aristotle's Poetics*, pp. 375-376.

[4] See James Feibleman, op. cit. p. 181.

[5] See, Chapter 3, entitled PERSONAL APPEARANCE etc.

or covered himself with feminine robes, and moved on the stage with appropriate gait and gestures, the laughter must have been readily evoked.[6]

The psychological level is, naturally, complex and varied. Some Vidūṣakas might exhibit mental instability, dullness or stupidity; they may fail to understand a point or misunderstand it. If humour arises on account of these factors, it is to be regarded as on psychological level. Thus, Duṣyanta turns to the Vidūṣaka for advice and assistance. The Vidūṣaka says, "In the matter of eating? Bless the moment!"[7] Some characters have 'low thresholds of emotional excitation. Given the slightest hint as to the nature of the expected reaction to a situation, they are liable to produce it in an exaggerated form.'[8] The loud laughter, wild dancing, clapping of hands and clicking of fingers at the most trivial instances that are exhibited by the Vidūṣaka in *Ratnāvalī* can thus be explained. Timidity or cowardice which is to be seen in most of the Vidūṣakas is, again, a comic perspective on the psychological level. The reactions of fear which would be expressed by appropriate gesticulation will naturally be understood on the physical level. The complex of hunger with implied gluttony which also is common to most of the Vidūṣakas is similarly to be explained both on the psychological and the physical levels. Further, if laziness is a mental attribute, then the life of ease and comfort which is loved by some of the Vidūṣakas and liked naturally by all of them will be a comic perspective on the psychological level.

The comic perspective on the sociological level is to be realised particularly in two aspects of the character of Vidūṣaka. The Vidūṣaka holds to ridicule, in his own character, the Brahmin caste, and this ridicule is a social satire on the pretensions, privileges and the parasitic encumbrance of this class.

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[6] See, Chapter X, entitled FUNCTION AND ROLE—I.

[7] Śāk., act II: 'किं मोदअखज्जिआए। तेण हि अअं सुगहीदो खणो।'

[8] See, Feibleman, op. cit., p. 196.

Secondly, the Vidūṣaka, as a privileged jester, fires a broadside at social and moral defects. And though the range is limited in most of the cases, there are Vidūṣakas who are not so handicapped by being merely butts of ridicule, and who consequently move in a wider circle. Kālidāsa's Vidūṣakas, for instance, have their gibes at the absurdities to be found in royal love, the intrigues of the harem and of court life. Bhāsa's Santuṣṭa casts a side-light on the absurd formalities of religion in the matter of apparel. But it is Maitreya of Śūdraka who in his social broadsides is a Prince among Vidūṣakas. The nature of the story has made the life of courtesans his principal target for wit and satire; but there is really nothing that seems to escape his observation and fails to stimulate his provocative tongue.

Humour on this level takes mostly a verbal form and appears as witty remarks of the Vidūṣaka. The formal structure of Sanskrit drama does not encourage a real comedy of Manners, except in the *Prakaraṇa* type to some extent and in *Prahasana*, which is a farce. However, there is enough of funny talk coming from the Vidūṣakas. Bhāsa employes a kind of malapropism, when the Vidūṣaka calls Brahmadatta a city and Kāmpilya a person when the exact reverse is the truth.[9] This Vidūṣaka gives a rhyming sound-effect by his words when he compares his *kukṣi-parivarta* (upsetting of stomach) with *akṣi-parivarta* (revolving of the pupil of the eye); this obviously has a humorous turn; and the double-meaning of *parivarta* becomes a further source of laughter when the Vidūṣaka confounds the *kokila* (cuckoo) with the *kāka* (crow) whose eye is supposed to move from one to the other socket.[10] More delightful probably is the

[9] SV., act V. 'अत्थि णअरं बम्हदत्तं णाम। तहिं किळ राआ कंपिळ्ळो णाम।' Cf. the king's comment, 'मूर्ख, राजा ब्रह्मदत्तः, नगरं काम्पिल्यं इति अभिधीयताम्।'

[10] SV., act IV, interlude: 'अधण्णस्स मम कोइळाणं अक्खिपरिवट्टो विअ कुक्खिपरिव टो संवुत्तो।'

See my dition of SV. for further explanation.

verbal lapse on the part of Maitreya. When he learns that a thief bored a hole through the wall, when they were sleeping, and bolted away with jewels, Maitreya, getting up from his bed, exclaims in confusion, "Eh? What did you say? Having bored a thief, the hole has bolted away?"[11] But such verbal humour is not in the line of the Vidūṣakas. They are not usually punsters. It is their witty remarks that are a source of laughter, and especially so when they are least expected. Queen Dhāriṇī wants to suppress the dispute between the two dance masters, though for a personal reason, and explains that it is futile. Gautama remarks, "Queen, let us watch the two rams fighting! Are we not paying them salaries?"[12] Duṣyanta is in a real dilemma and is unable to decide whether he should go to the Tapovana or back to his Capital. Māḍhavya advises, "Hang in the air like Triśaṅku!"[13]

The dramas provide varying situations of comic laughter centering round the figure of the Vidūṣaka. In *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa*, the Vidūṣaka has a fight with the Unmattaka over the alleged theft of the *modakas*. The Vidūṣaka uses strong words, threatens to break the Unmattaka's head, and makes a similar show of heroism before the Śramaṇaka who joins the scuffle. But the Vidūṣaka's courage fails him and he comes down to pious platitudes and to weeping![14] Santuṣṭa, in *Avimāraka*, finds himself duped by a cunning maid in broad daylight. She entices him by an invitation to dinner, takes his ring to inspect its workmanship, and vanishes into the crowds on the street. The poor Vidūṣaka shouts and runs after her; but his feet do not carry him any further. Later, Santuṣṭa

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[11] Mṛc., act III: 'आ दासीए धीए किं भणासि—चोरं कप्पिअ संधी णिक्कन्तो।'

[12] Mālavikā. act I: 'भोदि पेक्खामो उरब्भसंवादं। किं मुहा वेअणदाणेण।'

[13] Śāk., act II: 'तिसङ्कू विअ अन्तराले चिट्ठ।'

[14] Pratijñā., act III.

pretends to be a delicate damsel and refuses to go out of Kuraṅgī's apartment despite a suggestion, entreaty and a bribe of ornaments by Kuraṅgī's maid; and eventually is required to be dragged out by her.[15]

Śūdraka's Maitreya is afraid of darkness and of street crowds and requires the company of Cārudatta's maid Radanikā to go out in the street to place the evening *Bali* offerings. There, he defies Śakāra and uses brave words. But he is conscious that his attitude is like that of a dog that barks bravely standing on the threshold of his master's house. Then, Maitreya cuts a poor figure in the presence of Vasantasenā's Ceṭa. The latter puts simple riddles about '*senā*' and '*Vasanta*', which Maitreya is unable to solve. He makes a complete fool of himself by misunderstanding the directions of the Ceṭa, *padāi parivattāvehi*, by turning round himself and turning his feet about, when the Ceṭa meant only changing the order of the words! Further, the exchange of hot words and of blows between Śakāra and Maitreya in the court scene is quite amusing; the more so, because the wicked Śakāra thoroughly deserves this retribution; and the situation could have been really delightful had it not been for the tragic consequences to which it led. In the same way, the annoyance which Maitreya feels about the task of guarding the jewels, his babbling in sleep, his handing over the pot of ornaments to Śarvilaka, and the solemn blessings for a sound sleep with which Śarvilaka obediently takes possession of the jewels, create another situation full of mirth, the tragic side of which is not realised immediately.[16]

A deliberately planned situation is the hoax of serpent-bite that Gautama stages before Dhāriṇī. Since the audience is wise on this hoax, the contrast between Gautama's pretence of fright and Dhāriṇī's sincere anxiety is apt to raise a laughter of amusement.[17] Māḍhavya, in *Śākuntala*, finds himself in two

[15] Avi., acts II and V.

[16] Mṛc., acts I, V, IX and III respectively.

[17] Mālavikā., act IV.

situations which are not happy for himself but which, had they been actually shown on the stage, instead of being merely described, would have delighted a section of the audience. The first is when Māḍhavya is surrounded by the maids of Haṁsapadikā who pull his hair and rain blows on him ; and the second occurs when Mātali pounds him like a piece of sugarcane.[18]

Harṣa creates situations in his *Udayana* plays which are mortifying to the Vidūṣaka. A sympathetic maid and the Vidūṣaka arrange for a meeting between the hero and the heroine. But the queen steps unexpectedly on the scene. And this, together with mistaken identity, lead to an angry scene. The Vidūṣaka is blamed for the secret plan of the meeting, is bound hand and foot, and carried from the stage to a prison at the orders of the queen.[19] Harṣa paints an elaborate situation in *Nāgānanda*, which takes the space of a neat interlude. The Vidūṣaka Ātreya is returning from the marriage party, bedecked with flowers and carrying a present of a pair of silk garments. A swarm of bees, attracted by the fragrance, attacks him on his way. Ātreya wraps a silk garment in a womanly fashion and covers himself completely in order to escape from the bees. He succeeds in doing it, but falls, to his woe, in the hands of the drunken Viṭa who mistakes him for his beloved, the Ceṭī. The Ceṭī arrives on the scene and decides to enjoy herself at the cost of the Vidūṣaka. The Viṭa asks his servant, the Ceṭa, to hold the Vidūṣaka while he turned to propitiate his own beloved. The Vidūṣaka makes an attempt to run away; but the Ceṭa has held him fast by his sacred thread which, therefore, snaps in the attempt. The Vidūṣaka is then made to sit by the side of the maid. A glass of wine already tasted by her is forced on him by the Viṭa. When the Vidūṣaka protests vehemently, he is asked to prove that he is a real Brahmin by reciting a few words from the sacred Scriptures. The Vidūṣaka is unable to do this, and is constrained to fall at the feet of the maid to get

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[18] Śāk., acts V and VI resp.

[19] Priya. and Ratnā., act III.

out of the embarrassing situation. But before he can thank his stars for his lucky escape, another maid, in attendance on the hero and the heroine, fools him by equivocal words and, under the pretext of 'painting' him, besmears his face with the black juice of tamāla leaves ! [20]

Rājaśekhara presents a situation in which the Vidūṣaka Cārāyaṇa is solemnly made to go through a ceremony of his bigamous marriage; and it is discovered that the 'bride' was a slave boy dressed up in a woman's clothes ! Cārāyaṇa takes his revenge by turning tables on the queen's maid. He dupes her into a belief that she will die on a particular day unless she propitiated a Brahmin of special qualities and crawled between his legs to escape the messengers of death. This ridiculous ritual is presented on the stage and the Vidūṣaka stands over the crawling maid demonstrating his personal triumph. [21]

But it is the humour of character that is principally to be illustrated in the figure of the Vidūṣaka. In theory and practice the Vidūṣaka is *the* comic character. And in this regard several characteristics of the Vidūṣaka become a source of humour.

First, obviously, is the appearance of the Vidūṣaka, which is an object of laughter for others, and of which some Vidūṣakas themselves crack jokes. [22]

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[20] Nāgā., act III.

[21] Viddha., acts II and III.

[22] Especially, the Vidūṣakas of Kālidāsa. Cf.

(i) साहु रे पिङ्गलवाणर । साहु परित्तादो तुए संकटादो सपक्खो ।
Mālavikā., V.

(ii) किं तत्तभोदी उव्वसी अदुदिआ रूवेण अहं विअ विरूवदाए । Vik., II.

(iii) किमिति सङ्किस्सदि । णं अस्समवासपरिच्चिदो एव्व साहामिओ । Vik., V.

(iv) The king refers to Māḍhavya as 'माणवक' Śāk., VI.
Maitreya refers to his own misshapen head :
'अहं पि इमिणा करहजाणुसरिसेण सीसेण दुवेवि तुम्हे पसादेमि । Mṛc., act. I

Another is the fact that the Vidūṣaka happens to be a Brahmin. He is generally called a Mahābrāhmaṇa,[23] the phrase indicating a stupid and ignorant Brahmin. Bhāsa's Santuṣṭa asserts his caste by the sacred thread he wears.[24] He is unable to decipher letters though he has the nerve to say that the particular letters are not found in the book that he has studied.[25] But his ignorance becomes obvious when he describes the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a book on dramaturgy.[26] The Vidūṣakas of Kālidāsa do not parade their ignorance. It is Gautama only who once dubiously refers to the sacred Gāyatrī prayer which a Brahmin is expected to repeat in his daily ritual.[27] To Śūdraka's Maitreya, a woman learning Sanskrit appears like a cow snorting through her nostrils chafing with a new rope; a performance which he will be disinclined to do even for the fun of it. He expresses disapproval of an 'old priest, wearing a garland of withered flowers and muttering sacred texts'.[28] But it is Harṣa who makes greater fun of the ignorance of the Vidūṣaka. One of his Vidūṣakas goes through the formal ritual of ablution and muttering of prayer, and confesses that that alone is his claim to receive gifts in the royal palace.[29] But he does

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[23] Cf. for instance, SV. act IV, Mālavikā., act. II, Śāk., act II, Priya., act. II etc.

[24] Avi., act V: 'आम भोदि । जण्णोपवीदेण बह्मणो ।'

[25] Cf. Avi., act II, interlude: विदूषक :— (आत्मगतम् ।) अजाणमाणो किं भणिस्सं । भोदु दिट्ठं ।... (प्रकाशम् ।) भोदि, एदं अक्खरं मम पुत्थए णत्थि ।

[26] Ibid. 'किस्स अहं अवेदिओ । सुणाहि दाव । अत्थि रामाअणं णाम णट्टसत्थं । तस्सिं पञ्च सुल्लोआ असम्पुण्णे संवच्छरे मए पठिदा ।'

[27] Mālavikā., act IV: 'भोदि, जइ णीदीए एक्कं वि अक्खरं पढेअं तदो गाअत्तिं वि विसुमरेअं ।'

[28] Mṛc., act III: 'मम दाव दुवेहिं ज्जेव हस्सं जाअदि । ...इत्थिआ दाव सक्कअं पठन्ती दिण्णणवणस्सा विअ गिट्ठी अहिअं सुसुआअदि । मणुस्सो वि काअलीं गाअन्तो सुक्खसुमणोदामवेट्ठिदो बुड्ढपुरोहिदो विअ मन्तं जवन्तो दिढं मे ण रोअदि ।'

[29] Priya., act. II, opening: 'णं भणिदोम्हि... अज्ज उववासणिअमट्ठिआ देवी...सोत्थिवाअणणिमित्तं सद्दावेदि त्ति । ता जाव धाराघरण्हाणदिग्घिआए ण्हाइअ देवीपासं गदुअ कुक्कुटवादं करिस्सं । अण्णहा कहं अम्हाणं सरिसा बम्हणा राअउले पडिग्गहं करेन्ति ।'

not know even the number of the Vedas![30] Another, Ātreya, is put to a rigid test to prove his credentials as a Brahmin. He is asked to recite from the Vedas, which he cannot do. He shows some resourcefulness in observing before the drunken Viṭa that the sacred syllables of the Veda have evaporated on account of the offensive odour of the liquor.[31] The infallible test, therefore, is the sacred thread. Ātreya, however, is unable to pass even this test, because his sacred thread had already snapped in the struggle with the Ceṭa.[32] Cārāyaṇa of Rājaśekhara, although a Brahmin, is unable to write.[33]

The lack of Vedic learning is usually coupled with Brahmanical pride. Gautama demands that he, as a Brahmin, ought to have been first worshipped before the musical concert started.[34] Māṇavaka claims that the Moon speaks through him.[35] Maitreya resents the washing of feet that the servant has asked him to do for Cārudatta.[36] Harṣa does not show any respect for the Brahmanical dignity of the Vidūṣaka.

A further characteristic, consistent with the Brahmin caste of the Vidūṣaka, is his love of food. This remains an invariable

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[30] Ibid. act II: 'ईरिसो क्खु बम्हणो जो चउव्वेदपंचवेदछट्ठवेदबम्हणसहस्स-पज्जाउले राअउले पुढमं अहं एव्व...।'

The king's comment is, 'वेदसंख्यया एव आवेदितं ब्राह्मण्यम् ।'

[31] Nāgā., act III: 'इमिणा सीधुगन्धेण पिणद्धाइं (v. l. णट्ठाणि) मे वेदक्खराइं ।'

[32] Ibid. act III.

[33] Viddha., act II: विदूषकः—(भूमौ अक्षराणि लिखति ।)

The king's comment is, 'अष्टादशलिपिविदो वयं न त्वदीयाक्षरविचक्षणाः ।'

In act I, the Vidūṣaka says, 'णाहं लिहिदुं जाणिदो ।'

[34] Mālavikā., act II: 'पुढमोपदेसदंसणे पुढमं बम्हणस्स पूआ कादव्वा । सा णं वो विसुमरिदा ।'

[35] Vik., act III: 'भो बम्हणसंकामिदक्खरेण दे पिदामहेण अब्भणुणादो आसणट्ठिदो होइ...।'

[36] Mṛc., act III: 'भो वअस्स...मं उण बम्हणं पादाइं धोवावेदि ।'

Cf. for similar attitude of the Vidūṣaka, Nāgā., act III: 'कहं राअमित्तो बम्हणो भविअ दासीए धीआए पाएसु पडिस्सं ।

trait with the Vidūṣaka. Though the greed for food is unlimited, its expression has few variations. If Vasantaka of Bhāsa mourns the loss of his digestion,[37] Maitreya laments over the turn of events that has landed him in poverty along with Cārudatta. He recalls the days when he could feed himself like a bull in the market-square. He goes poetical in describing how he could taste dish after dish and push them away, like a painter touching the dishes of his pigments with the delicate tip of his brush.[38] Invitation for dinner is a sufficient bait for the Vidūṣaka. Santuṣṭa will allow himself to be duped;[39] and Māṇavaka[40] and Bhāsa's Vasantaka[41] will be prepared to change their loyalties for an offer of food. If eating is the only important work in the eyes of Māḍhavya,[42] Māṇavaka sees food everywhere;[43] and the only interesting place on the earth for him is the kitchen.[44] Bhāsa's Vasantaka sums up the philosophy

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[37] Cf. SV., act IV: 'एक्को खु महन्तो दोसो, मम आहारो सुट्ठु ण परिणमदि।'

[38] Mṛc., act I, opening speech: '...हा अवत्थे तुलीअसि। जो णाम अहं तत्तभवदो चारुदत्तस्स रिद्धीए अहोरत्तं पअतणसिद्धेहिं उग्गारसुरहिगन्धेहिं मोदकेहिं ज्जेव असिदो अब्भन्तरचउस्सालअदुआए उवट्ठिदो मल्लकसदपरिवुदो चित्तअरो विअ अंगुलीहिं छिविअ छिविअ अवणेमि। णअरचत्तरवुसहो विअ रोमन्थाअमाणो चिट्ठामि।...'

[39] See, Avi., act II.

[40] Vik., act II. Māṇavaka promises to dissuade the king from his passion for Urvaśī.

[41] SV., act IV. Vasantaka prefers Padmāvatī to Vāsavadattā, because the former takes care of his meals.

[42] Śāk., act II. When Duṣyanta asks for his help in a simple task, Māḍhavya says, किं मोदअखज्जिआए।'

[43] Vik., act III. Cf. the king's comment, 'सर्वत्र औदरिकस्य अभ्यवहार्यमेव विषयः।'

[44] Vik., act II:

राजा—अथ क्वेदानीमात्मानं विनोदयेयम्।

विदूषकः—महाणसं गच्छम्ह।

राजा—किं तत्र।

विदूषकः—तहिं पञ्चविहस्स अब्भवहारस्स उवणदसंभारस्स जोअणं पेक्खमाणेहिं सक्कं उक्कण्ठा विणोदेदुं।

of food when he defines happiness as excellent digestion coupled with excellent appetite.[45]

Cowardice is one more trait that comes in the wake of the Brahmin caste. After all, courage or heroism has not been the strong point of the Brahmins as a community. The dramatists extract fun out of this characteristic in two ways: by an exhibition of open fear and by a show of mock heroism. Many Vidūṣakas are afraid of the serpent.[46] Maitreya is afraid of darkness.[47] Ātreya fears bees.[48] Māḍhavya is frightened by a report about demons.[49] Even the palace maids hold terror for some Vidūṣakas.[50] Consequently the Vidūṣakas can be brave only before pigeons, bees, or cupid's arrows, that is to say, mango blossoms. Maitreya appears to divulge the secret of such heroism when he says that even a dog is a hero on the threshold of his master's house.[51]

Later, in act III, he mocks at heaven: 'किं वा सग्गे सुमरिदव्वं। ण वा अण्हीअदि ण वा पीअदि। केवलं अणिमिसेहिं णअणेहिं मीणा विडम्बीअन्दि।'

45 SV., act IV, interlude: 'भो सुहं णामअपरिभूदं अकळ्ळवत्तं च।'

46 For instance, Vasantaka in SV., Māṇavaka in Vik., Gautama in Mālavikā.

47 Mṛc., act. I. Maitreya refuses to go out to place the Bali offerings; among other reasons, he mentions, 'ता मण्डूअलुद्धस्स कालसप्पस्स मूसिओ विअ अहिमुदावदिदो वज्झो दाणिं भविस्सं।'

48 Cf. Nāgā., III.

49 Śāk., act II. The king asks the Vidūṣaka whether he would like to accompany him to the Tapovana to see Śakuntalā:

'माढव्य, अप्यस्ति शकुन्तलादर्शने कुतूहलम्।'

The Vidūṣaka replies, 'पढमं सपरिवाहं आसि। दाणिं रक्खसवुत्तन्तेन बिन्दु वि णावसेसिदो।'

50 For instance, Māṇavaka in Vik. In act II, interlude, he says, on seeing the maid coming, 'इमं दुट्ठचेडिअं पेक्खिअ तं राअरहस्सं हिअअं भिन्दिअ णिक्कमदि।'

Māḍhavya refuses to go in Haṁsapadikā's apartment, though Duṣyanta rules out his protest. Śāk., act V.

51 Mṛc., act I: 'भो सके गेहे कुक्कुरो वि दाव चण्डो भोदि...।

Finally, there is a characteristic which is really independent of the conventional conception of the Vidūṣaka—his wit, which is a genuine source of laughter. It manifests itself very often as innocent nonsense; but occasionally it is crammed with practical wisdom. In fact, the Vidūṣaka, often becomes the mouthpiece of sound common-sense. The Vidūṣaka's definition of happiness has been referred to above. It wears humour on the surface, but contains a deeper practical truth of life. To the king surprised by his queen, when making love to the heroine, the Vidūṣaka's advice is: 'Run! What else can a thief caught red-handed do?'[52] or 'A thief caught in the act might say: I am only testing the theory by a practical application.'[53] His comment on the queen who helplessly gets reconciled with the new co-wife: 'When a fish slips through the hand, the dejected fisherman says he was observing piety!'[54] To the impatient lover: 'You *are* a wretched patient! You not only want a doctor but you want the doctor also to fetch the medicine for you!'[55] 'A courtesan', says Maitreya, 'is like a pebble caught in the shoe. Even removal hurts!'[56]

At times the Vidūṣaka is not merely a critic in motley; he is a philosopher, especially when he acts as a sympathetic friend to the distressed hero. Māḍhavya says to Duṣyanta: 'Good men do not allow themselves to be affected by distress. Mountains are not shaken even by a whirlwind.'[57]

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[52] Cf. Mālavikā., act III: 'किं अण्गं। जंघाबलं एव्व।
Vik., act II: 'लोत्तेण गहीदस्स कुम्भिलअस्स अत्थि वा पडिवअणं।'

[53] Mālavikā., act III: 'कम्मगगहीदेण कुम्भीलएण संधिच्छेदे सिक्खिओम्मि त्ति वत्तव्वं होदि।'

[54] Vik., act III: 'छिण्णहत्थो मच्छे पलाइदे णिव्विण्णो धीवरो भणादि धम्मो मे हुविस्सदि त्ति।'

[55] Mālavikā., act II: 'साहु तुमं दलिद्दो विअ आदुरो वेज्जेण उवणीअमाणं ओसहं इच्छसि।'

[56] Mṛc., act V: 'गणिआ णाम पादुअन्तरप्पविट्ठा विअ लेट्ठुआ दुक्खेण उण णिराकरीअदि।'

[57] Śāk., act VI: 'कदा वि सप्पुरिसा सोअपत्तप्पाणो ण होन्ति। णं पवादे वि णिक्कम्पा गिरिओ।'

If the ability to laugh in the face of misfortune is a feature of humane comedy,[58] Santuṣṭa and Maitreya are our examples. Kuraṅgī was about to commit suicide; Avimāraka's timely arrival saves her and tears come to her eyes. Santuṣṭa says: 'Please don't weep. Else, I will weep with you. But the trouble is I cannot shed tears. I started crying with great effort when my father died. But the tears did not come.'[59] Cārudatta's lament over his poverty is deep and harrowing. But Maitreya observes: 'Friend, wealth is a whore's child, an insubstantial breakfast. It runs to where it cannot be enjoyed, like young cowherds, afraid of wasps, running into a forest where they are not bitten!'[60] And when Cārudatta is faced with the unkindest moment of his life, the exchange of hot words and of blows between Maitreya and Śakāra brings a sad smile on a grim background. Both these Vidūṣakas, however, follow their friends to death. If ever laughter was mixed with tears Santuṣṭa and Maitreya carry the mixture.

This quality, namely wit, illustrates the most essential conditions of humour: acute observation and intelligence. It is not surprising that the Indian theorists, too, associate wisdom with the Vidūṣaka. After all, he is not a fool who only looks a fool. He does not wear motley in his brain.

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[58] Feibleman, op. cit. pp. 241 ff.

[59] Avi., act V: 'अळं अदिमत्तं सन्दावेण। अहव अहं वि रोदामि। एक्कं पि तहिं दुल्लहं मम णअणादो बप्फं ण णिग्गच्छइ। जदा मे पिदा उवरदो, तदा वि महन्तेण आरम्भेण रोदिदुं आरद्धो। बप्फं ण णिग्गच्छइ।'

[60] Mṛc., act I: 'भो वअस्स, एदे क्खु दासीए पुत्ता अत्थकल्लवत्ता वरडाभीदा विअ गोवालदारआ अरण्णे जहिं जहिं ण खज्जन्ति तहिं तहिं गच्छन्ति।'

XIV

THE DECLINE OF THE VIDŪṢAKA

Bharata shows full awareness of the nature and function of laughter, although he has confined its objective to pure entertainment which he regarded as the supreme purpose of dramatic representation. The types of the Vidūṣakas he has conceived and the qualities and function that he has associated with them, especially the quality of wisdom and the role of the Vidūṣaka as the hero's companion, clearly suggest that Bharata's idea of laughter was not crude and that the laughter he contemplated was not limited to the physical and physiological levels. Further, Bharata's recognition of laughter as a distinct *Rasa*, and of such forms of drama as the *Prakaraṇa*, *Prahasana* and *Bhāṇa*, was a positive indication in the direction of social drama, in which comedy and laughter could have ever-widening scope.

Bharata's theory is exemplified, even amplified, in the actual dramatic practice. The dramatists followed Bharata in adopting the physical and physiological laughter connected with the Vidūṣaka. But they also portrayed humour on the psychological and sociological levels. It may be assumed that the dramatists portrayed all the four types of Vidūṣakas which Bharata prescribed, inspite of the fact that the actual specimens are not now available to us.

Bharata, however, must have conceived these types in relation to a sort of propriety. The association of a particular type of Vidūṣaka alone would have been 'proper' with a particular type of hero. This was a question both of social and literary propriety, especially in the days of the classics. But once this principle of propriety was accepted, it was necessary to understand the *basic* types from a purely literary point of view—the basic types, that is to say, that would be discover-

able in any or all of the four types prescribed by Bharata. For, whether the Vidūṣaka happens to be an ascetic, a Brahmin, a royal protégé or a pupil, in playing the fool and evoking laughter he is either laughed at by others, or he laughs at others.

In analysing the old classical comedy of Greece, Aristotle gives a threefold classification of fools : The Buffoon, who is a simple fool ; the Eiron, who, though a fool, is wise and is aware of his wisdom ; and the Imposter, who covers inward cowardice and folly under a vain pretence of bravery and wisdom.[1] In the old comedy to which Aristotle is referring the Buffoon and the Eiron are pitted against the Imposter. The Eiron victimises the Imposter.

It is possible to say that the Buffoon and the Imposter correspond to the Vidūṣaka and the Eiron is probably the Viṭa. Harṣa's *Nāgānanda* actually represents a scene where the Viṭa victimises Ātreya, the Vidūṣaka, who neatly answers the description of an Imposter in his attempt to cover his cowardice and ignorance. But the Imposter is not a distinct type in Sanskrit drama ; the pretence is found in many Vidūṣakas. Further, the Viṭa according to the Sanskrit theory is not a conventional comic character.

Prof. Gordon is probably right in saying that there are essentially two types of fools: "One, half wit, half natural ; the other, part fool, part knave." And of course, 'each type has its varieties'.[2] The Vidūṣaka likewise is either a butt of ridicule or he ridicules others. But the wit and wisdom he possesses may be either conscious or unconscious. With this distinction in view, the Vidūṣakas appear to reveal three main types, as Aristotle discovered in the classical comedy.

The first is the FOOL, the simple Vidūṣaka. This is a silly, stupid, idiotic type. The peculiarity of this type is that the

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[1] See F. M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, p. 136.
[2] Gordon, *Shakespearian Comedy*, p. 60.

Vidūṣaka has no separate existence of his own but is tagged on to the hero whose friend and companion he is. He is dull and has no business to perform, except the conventional one. But being constantly in the company of the hero some of his tasks devolve on him. He, however, miscarries them, or makes a mess of them; and often creates complications for the hero. He has some wit; but the fun he provides is usually at his own cost. In fact, he is a butt of ridicule, a laughing-stock.[3]

Most of the Vidūṣakas, and particularly the figures portrayed by later dramatists, fall under this category. The best illustrations of this type are Kālidāsa's Māḍhavya and Harṣa's Ātreya. Māṇavaka and Vasantaka in *Priyadarśikā* are very close to this type in their blundering folly, although there is no open ridicule to which they are subjected. And contrarily, though Santuṣṭa is outwitted by the Ceṭī and Maitreya by the Ceṭa, their essential type is different.

The second type is the CRITIC, the wise Vidūṣaka. This type of Vidūṣaka is a clown but he is a 'superior member of this order.'[4] His wit and wisdom are of considerable proportion. Shakespeare's Touchstone is the example. Like him, the Vidūṣaka moves through the play mocking at everything that comes within his ken, with a salutary mockery; for, 'in his brain he hath strange places cramm'd, with observation.' 'He

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[3] Cornford thus describes the type: 'The subordinate buffoon who attends the more serious hero has, so to say, no independent existence. He is a mere delegate on whom this side of the hero's (in Comedy) role is devolved in situations where the hero himself has to keep up a less farcical character ...This deputy clown is marked off as a distinct type only in that he is always in a subordinate position, never master of the situation as Eiron is. Hence, he is the Buffoon, pure and simple, as defined by Aristotle—the ungentlemanly person who makes fun for the amusement of others.' *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

[4] See, J. B. Priestley, *The English Comic Characters*, p. 21.

uses his folly like a stalking-horse and, under the presentation of that, he shoots his wit.'[5] And probably the real charm of his character is that he is unconscious of the wisdom that he is continually spilling. He is a critic in motley. It is this type, again, that is really distinguished by humane kindness.

The supreme example of this type is Śūdraka's Maitreya. Bhāsa's Santuṣṭa also must be placed in this category as much for his practical wisdom as for his humanity, although they do not equal those of Maitreya. Vasantaka in *Svapnavāsavadatta* and in *Ratnāvalī* are close to this type; the one, for his loyalty and wisdom, and the other, for his humane devotion. Kālidāsa's Māṇavaka and Maḍhavya are real critics, but their basic trait is stupidity.

The third type is the ROGUE, the Vidūṣaka who wears the mantle of a professional fool but is clever and knows it. This type should correspond to Aristotle's Eiron.[6] The clownish dulness of this type is a mask. He plays the fool on purpose. He moves in the play in his motley garb, consciously poking fun at other characters. While his buffoonery prevents the attribution of a motive, he is able to have the whole fun for his own private amusement. If the first type is a butt of ridicule and the second partially so, this type ridicules others, consciously, and on purpose.

This type is finely illustrated in Kālidāsa's portrait of Gautama, who is a clever rogue who draws his fun out of every character, including the hero. Vasantaka in *Pratijñāyaugan-*

[5] Shakespeare, *As You Like It.*

[6] Cf. Cornford: 'The Eiron...masks his cleverness under a show of clownish dulness. He is a fox in the sheep's clothing of a Buffoon. His attitude is precisely expressed by Demos, 'I play the simpleton like this on purpose'...In the Rhetoric, Aristotle says that the Ironical Jester makes fun for his own private satisfaction, whereas the Buffoon does it to amuse others.' *op. cit.*, pp. 136 ff., 138.

dharāyaṇa is a little dubious type, but must be included under this category; his clownish behaviour conceals a serious purpose. A similar type, though obviously inferior in merit, is Rājaśekhara's Cārāyaṇa, who is subjected to ridicule but succeeds in having his own revenge.

It was essential that Sanskrit dramatists realised these basic types and some theorist of the later period recognised them. Had they done so, Sanskrit drama would have been spared the dull and dead monotony that characterises the figure of the Vidūṣaka. Unfortunately the Vidūṣaka tended to become a stock character.

There are, really speaking, two elements in a comic character that possess the potential of growth and development: One is what the comic character stands for, which may be a social type, a social or moral vice. The other is the context or the association in which the character is put. The Vidūṣaka symbolises the uneducated, stupid, pretentious Brāhmaṇa who was a social parasite. There certainly was much to ridicule about such a class of Brahmins. Their pride and privileges coupled with enormous ignorance, their clinging to ritual formality which often concealed hypocrisy and selfishness, there apparent piety which became only an excuse for irrepressiable greed—all these were fine subjects for ridicule, satire and comic treatment. But how much fun can be drawn out of them and for how long a period? For ten and odd centuries the Vidūṣaka has remained a Mahābrāhmaṇa. He has no knowledge of the Vedas. He cannot recite mantras. He cannot read or he cannot write. Again, for ten and odd centuries, his love of food has not abated. He still loves his *modakas* and lingers about the kitchen. All the jokes are already there. The later dramatists could not but repeat what the early classical poets had already said. In fact, there was nothing left in the caricature that could be put to new comical use.

The associations of the Vidūṣaka are limited. Some drama-

tists refer to the parents of the Vidūṣaka. Harṣa mentions his wife, the Brāhmaṇī. Rājaśekhara brings the Brāhmaṇī on the stage.[7] But if Harṣa's reference provides at least a ground for the exhibition of Vidūṣaka's childish pride, the scene in *Viddha-śālabhañjikā* has not even a semblance of comic treatment.

The association of the Vidūṣaka with palace maids remains perhaps the only source for the development of humour. But in this sphere too, the possibilities are well-nigh exhausted. The Vidūṣaka could either be subjected to ridicule by the maids, or he could make fun of them. But the maid appears to possess intelligence and cunning which are in inverse proportion to her low birth. Hence, the dramatists have to fall back mainly on the first of the two possibilities, making the Vidūṣaka a butt of ridicule. Santuṣṭa is duped by the maid.[8] Māṇavaka trembles at the approach of the queen's maid and falls an easy victim to her cunning.[9] Māḍhavya is surrounded by Haṁsapadikā's maids who pull his hair and belabour him.[10] The maid joins in the fun to which Ātreya is subjected by the drunken Viṭa, though, later, she apologises to him.[11]

What else could the later dramatists show? The Vidūṣaka in *Karṇasundarī* notices the plantain leaves and lotus stalks that the maid was carrying, concealed under the skirt of her garment. He calls off her bluff, pulls them out and forces her to divulge the love-sick condition of the heroine.[12] Cārāyaṇa succeeds in having his revenge on Mekhalā by making her crawl between his legs.[13] If this is Vidūṣaka's triumph over the maid, he may be granted the credit for being able to arrange it. But how

[7] See, Note No. (37) to Ch. 1.

[8] Avi., act II, Interlude.

[9] Vik., act II, Interlude.

[10] Śāk., act V.

[11] Nāgā., act III.

[12] Karṇa., act II.

[13] Viddha., act III.

can this cunning be regarded as an improvement in characterisation, when the Vidūṣaka of Rājaśekhara is already shown to be a victim of the maid's joke, and when his own counter-joke is only a revenge inflicted out of malice? This Vidūṣaka only proves that he is both a fool and a knave. He cannot come near Kālidāsa's Gautama who fools the queen by a delightful hoax[14] from which personal hurt and malice are absent.

It is true that there was never any love lost between the Vidūṣaka and the maid. Aśvaghoṣa depicts a quarrel between the Vidūṣaka and a courtesan. A maid replaces the Gaṇikā in later plays. The Vidūṣakas, from Bhāsa to Rājaśekhara, use abusive language while talking to the maid. The phrases are set and conventional.[15] Rājaśekhara tries to improve on Bhāsa in inventing more sonorous epithets which have a greater abusive connotation.[16] But in doing it, Rājaśekhara commits a double error: If abuse is a form of humour, it is humour on a primitive and low level. The Vidūṣakas portrayed by the classical poets may indulge in conventional abuse of the maid; but that is not their only or chief source of humour. Rājaśekhara, on the contrary, employs only a string of abuses and displays a poor taste for humour. Further, the classical poets confine the abuse to scenes between the Vidūṣaka and the maid exclusively, and do not go beyond conventional phrases when the royal hero is present. This was a rule of propriety to which Abhinava had already drawn the attention of writers.[17] In

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[14] Mālavikā., act IV.

[15] Usually, 'दासीए धीए' (दास्याः पुत्र्याः) or, 'दुट्ठचेडी' etc.

[16] Bhāsa's Santuṣṭa (Avi., act II) uses 'गण्डभेददासी' and 'कुम्भदासी'. Rājaśekhara's Kapiñjala (Karpūra., act I) has, 'दासीए धूदे भविस्सकुट्टिणि, णिल्लक्खणे', 'दासीए पुत्ति टेण्टाकराले कोससदचट्टिणि रच्छालोट्टणि' and etc.

Cārāyaṇa (Viddha., act II) uses, 'दासीए दुहिदे कुट्टणि भमरिणि टेटेटेण्टाकारिणि टुटुसंवलिदे विसमकत्तरि...' etc.

[17] Abhinava on NS. XII. 142 (GOS, vol. II, p. 160): 'न च राजनि संनिकृष्टे अश्लीलभाषणं समुचितम्। एवं सर्वत्रोक्तम्।'

fact, Bharata had permitted the use of obscene language in a specific type of Vidūṣaka only, namely, the one associated with a merchant hero.[18] Rājaśekhara is, therefore, guilty of a breach of decorum.

The inner circle of the harem in which the Vidūṣaka moved was apt to put limitations on his behaviour and speech. It was possible for the Vidūṣaka to derive his fun out of court intrigues and the loose sex morality of palace life, and not become merely a victim of such fun. But as a member of the royal harem, the Vidūṣaka was required to keep himself unentangled in the affairs of the harem. He could be free with his speech, but not with his behaviour. It is not without reason that the theorists prescribe "purity of conduct" as a qualification for the associates of the king who have a free access to the harem.[19] Secondly, the role of the Vidūṣaka was fixed as a companion of the hero of an erotic comedy. These two important reasons restrict the behaviour of the Vidūṣaka in an episode of love. The social propriety prevented the Vidūṣaka from having any 'affair' of his own; and the dramatic setting excluded him from a major part in a concurrent love-theme, when the hero himself was shown pursuing the course of love. The Vidūṣaka, as a Brahmin and as a royal companion, could never play the role of a lover. A maid presents her ornaments to Santuṣṭa and says that by accepting them he has become her lover.[20] It is a good joke; but it is only an excuse to take the Vidūṣaka out of the heroine's apartment.[21]

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[18] See, BP. (GOS), pp. 281-282. See also Note (1) to Ch. IX.

[19] Cf. BP. p. 281, ll. 19-20:

विदूषकस्तु भूपानामग्राम्यपरिहासकः ।
अर्थेषु स्त्रीषु शुद्धश्च देवीपरिजनप्रियः ॥

[20] Avi., act V: नलिनिका—(विदूषकं हस्ते गृहीत्वा) को तुवं, मम सव्वाभरणं गेण्हिअ वल्लहो जादो ।

[21] Read in continuation of the preceding quotation:
विदूषकः—भोदि, मा मा एवं । अदिसुउमारो खु अहं ।
नलिनिका—जाणामि जाणामि दे सुउमारत्तणं । जइ सुउमारो, सिग्घं एहि ।

Among the associates of a hero,[22] the Ceṭa was a slave and the Vidūṣaka, both a Brahmin and a jester by profession. It was, therefore, possible only for the Viṭa and the Pīṭhamarda, both refined and cultured types, to play the role of a lover. Harṣa has already shown the Viṭa playing lover to a palace maid.[23] Bhavabhūti shows Makaranda, a Pīṭhamarda, involved doubly in love-intrigues.[24] Both *Nāgānanda* and *Mālatīmādhava* correctly illustrate the types that can be used in an episode of love; and both also illustrate the comic effect that can be derived out of such employment. Alternatively, an independent and a free Brahmin youth like Śarvilaka could fall in love with a courtesan's maid and undertake to burgle a house in order to win her freedom and her love.[25] As long as the Vidūṣaka was tied down to the king and the harem, and as long as he remained a ludicrous figure in virtue of his physical deformity, in addition to being a Brahmin, it was impossible for him to play a lover even for comic effect. The joke, if perpetrated, could only be at his own cost. The testimony of Rājaśekhara is clear on the point that the Vidūṣaka could not have a personal connection with a love affair. Kapiñjala, in *Karpūramañjarī* confesses that 'a person of his type is neither harassed by Cupid nor wilted by the seasonal heat'.[26]

विदूषकः—मोदि अअं आअच्छामि । (निष्क्रान्तौ ।) Avi., act V.

[22] The *Agnipurāṇa* gives Pīṭhamarda, Viṭa and Vidūṣaka. BP. (p. 93) mentions Pīṭhamarda, Viṭa and Vidūṣaka. SD. (III. 40) gives Viṭa Ceṭa Vidūṣaka and others. RS. (I. 89) mentions Pīṭhamarda, Viṭa, Ceṭa and Vidūṣaka.

[23] Nāgā., act III.

[24] Cf. Mālatī. Makaranda is himself in love with Madayantikā, and dons a bride's robe to dupe her brother Nandana who wanted to marry Mālatī.

[25] Mṛc., acts III and IV.

[26] Karpūra., IV (HOS, iv), pp. 92-93: विदूषकः—एक्के मम्मथवाहणिज्जा अण्णे तावसोसणिज्जा । अम्हारिसो उण जणो ण कामस्स बाहणिज्जो ण तावस्स सोसणिज्जो ।

It is, therefore, wrong to imagine that the treatment of Rājaśekhara shows the Vidūṣaka to be a Patākānāyaka, that is to say, a hero in an erotic bye-plot.[27] The *patākā*,[28] by definition, is an episode that has no independent purpose of its own, and which, while merging with the main theme, contributes to its development. Viśvanātha cites, as an example of the *patākā*, the conduct of the Vidūṣaka in Śākuntala. It is correct; for, the dismissal of the Vidūṣaka in all the three scenes in which he appears, definitely contributes to the development of the main theme of the play. The *patākā*, when correctly employed, will always serve such a contributory purpose. In Harṣa's treatment there is some connection that can be discovered between the drunken bout that is staged and one important theme that is developed in the play: It is the hero's marriage and the celebrations that followed that have occasioned the hilarous scene in which the Viṭa, the Ceṭa, the Ceṭī and the Vidūṣaka are involved. But already the connection of the humorous episode to the main theme has begun to be loose. In Rājaśekhara's treatment, the episode stands detached like an interlude. Cārāyaṇa's second marriage is a practical joke that the queen has practised on the Vidūṣaka. The following episode is Vidūṣaka's counter-joke inflicted on the daughter of the queen's nurse and is a revenge that he takes for being fooled.

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[27] This is J. T. Parikh's assumption: 'The Vidūṣaka... gradually ceases to be a merely comic character and emerges as the hero of a farcical bye-plot, the episode or the Patākā.' (*Vidūṣaka: Theory and Practice*, p. 36.) I do not think that this interpretation is warranted.

[28] Cf. SD., VI. 67:

ब्यापि प्रासङ्गिकं वृत्तं पताकेत्यभिधीयते ।
पताकानायकस्य स्यान्न स्वकीयफलान्तरम् ॥

यथा रामचरिते सुग्रीवादेः, वेण्यां भीमादेः, शाकुन्तले विदूषकस्य चरितम् । Comm.

Also, DR., I. 13:

सानुबन्धं पताकाख्यं, प्रकरी च प्रदेशभाक् ॥

दूरं यदनुवर्तेते प्रासङ्गिकं सा पताका सुग्रीवादिवृत्तान्तवत् ।

It only inspires the queen to carry the joke on to the king himself. The total effect, however, is that the main theme is side-tracked. Besides, the Vidūṣaka's joke is not in good taste; for, it shows a woman crawling between the legs of a Brahmin and the royal hero and the queen witnessing the performance. It is possible to understand such a scene in a *Prahasana*, a farce. But Rājaśekhara claims the play to be a *Nāṭikā*, which is supposed to be on as dignified a level as a *Nāṭaka*.

Abuse, practical joke and laughter that have remote connection with the theme of the play, are not signs of development, but of decadence. From the classical poets, who employed conventional tricks for laughter but did not fail to portray simultaneously humour of a refined type, to Rājaśekhara who resorts to primitive modes, it is a downward path to deterioration in literary taste.

An examination of the later plays reveals an unmistakable tendency towards mechanical treatment, or alteration of the basis of characterization, depriving the Vidūṣaka of his comic essence.

Bilhaṇa, for instance, does not find it necessary to provide the Vidūṣaka with a personal name and mentions him by the general appellation only.[29] As if the Vidūṣaka was too mechanical a character to have a distinct individuality! Kṣemīśvara introduces a Vidūṣaka, Baudhāyana, in *Caṇḍakauśika*, which is a drama of the cruelty of Viśvāmitra and the sufferings of Hariścandra, which leave really no scope for the conventional Vidūṣaka. The author's deviation from settled practice is ineffective, because he fails to utilize the comic motive for tragic relief. The Vidūṣaka cracks a few well-worn jokes in the opening act and disappears for good.[30] The Vidūṣaka in *Ratimanmatha* is tagged on to the hero Manmatha and is seen in the first two acts. But he is superfluous in the structure of

[29] See, Karṇa. KM, No. 7 (1888).
[30] See, Caṇḍa. (Calcutta), act I.

the story, and his humour is stale. He is an uneducated Brahmin (*anūcāna-śrotriya*). He boasts of his knowledge of astrology which, he assures the hero, will help him in securing an access to the heroine. The hero's only comment on this is that 'inconsistency of speech is an ornament of the species of Vidūṣakas'.[31] The Vidūṣaka is a glutton (*audarika*), fond of his *modakas*, and is ready to leave the hero in order to join a picnic of Brahmins. He encourages the hero to paint the heroine's portrait; and drops the canvas so that it can be neatly picked up and carried to the heroine. He cracks a joke about the ugliness of his own Brāhmaṇī;[32] utters one or two platitudes; all of which is in the well-worn tradition.

The stupidity of the Vidūṣaka and his illuminating practical wisdom provide a contradiction that belongs to the comic order. The fool, as remarked earlier, does not wear motley in his brain. But in order that this incongruity remains on the comic level, it is necessary that the 'brain' of the Vidūṣaka is stimulated by authentic happenings shown in the play itself, so that the Vidūṣaka's brainy observations appear as a comic perspective on a given situation. If, on the contrary, the Vidūṣaka talks foolishly and wisely in alternate turns, the incongruity becomes a contradiction in characterization. For, the Vidūṣaka then gives the impression that he talks foolishly on purpose; and that his usual nature is quite its opposite. It is obviously a denial of a real comic character.

But this is what happens with these later Vidūṣakas. Bilhaṇa's Vidūṣaka and Rājaśekhara's Cārāyaṇa each speak a Sanskrit verse.[33] The latter is actually complimented by the

[31] *Ratimanmatha*, act I: 'अलंकारोऽयमीदृशानां यदसम्बद्धव्यवहारिता इति।'

[32] Ibid., act II: Appreciating Rati's beautiful portrait, the Vidūṣaka says to Manmatha, 'वअस्स, जहत्थं कहेहि किं मह बम्हणीए रूवेण एसा सरिसीत्ति।'

[33] Karṇa., I. 50; Viddha., I. 30.

hero on his having developed Sanskrit.[34] In fulfilment of a choric function, the Vidūṣaka certainly provides scenic description, partly as a poetic diversion and partly as an indication of scene-shift. The elaborate and ornate expressions put in the mouth of the Vidūṣaka on these occasions subserve, therefore, an obvious purpose. But when the Vidūṣakas in the plays of Bilhaṇa, Rājaśekhara and Mahādeva[35] are seen speaking in elaborate language, using long compounds and ornate expressions, in normal context, it cannot but be interpreted as a sign of deviation and decadence of the comic character.

The cleavage between the apparent stupidity and the basic sanity in the Vidūṣaka's character is most apparent in Rājaśekhara's plays and in the Prakrit *Saṭṭakas*. The Vidūṣaka in these plays enters into a poetic contest with the queen's maid and, or otherwise, gives a comic description, making a fool of himself somewhat.[36] But looking to his poetic descriptions on other occasions, his poetic faculty and sane observations, it becomes obvious that the Vidūṣaka is making only a professional show of his foolishness. The tales about the lack of learning which the Vidūṣaka in the *Saṭṭakas* tells[37] become, therefore, fairy tales. They are robbed of their comic essence. If Mahodara in *Adbhutadarpaṇa* possesses the ability to discuss pure logic and politics with Rāvaṇa,[38] Cakora in *Candralekhā* displays accurate knowledge of the theme, rhyme and metre of

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[34] Cf. Viddha., I. 30. f. 'संस्कृतेऽपि प्रगल्भसे।'

[35] Vide Karṇa., Karpūra. and Adbhuta.

[36] See, Karpūra., I. 19; Candra., I. 17.[18–21].

[37] Kapiñjala (Karpūra., I. 18.[1–2, 9]. HOS, pp. 12-13) says: 'भो तुम्हाणं सव्वाणं मज्झे अहं एक्को कालक्खरिओ। जस्स मे ससुरससुरो परघरे पोत्थअभारो वहन्तो आसि।...अकालजलदवंससंभूदाणं परंपराए पण्डिच्चं।'

Cakora (Candra., I. 26.[1–5]) says: 'जदो पुरुवं एव्व अम्हाणं घरए समागअं पंडिअत्तणं कइत्तणं च पहिसु पडिरोहअभआदो अम्हबम्हणीसअणिज्जेक्कपाससंठविआअं मंजूसिआअं णिहाविअ लोहसालाए गाढं बंधिअ मुद्दं वि दाऊण साउम्मि समुद्दे संगण्हिअ आअदो।'

[38] See, Adbhuta., act VI (KM, No. 55, 1896).

a poetic composition.[39] Likewise, Rājaśekhara's Cārāyaṇa is an expert on Gāndharva Veda[40] and is able to quote appropriately from Dharmaśāstra.[41] Kapiñjala calls himself the Vṛttikāra of the king who is described as a Sūtrakāra.[42] An ability of this kind is to be expected not from the comic Vidūṣaka but from the refined and cultured Viṭa. The Vidūṣaka seems to have shifted his basis. It is interesting to note that the queen, in *Karṇasundarī*, describes the Vidūṣaka actually as a Brahmin Viṭa.[43] This shift is a loss to comic representation.

That the Vidūṣaka had ceased to be a genuine comic character and had become a professional, and consequently, a mechanical fool, is an inference that cannot be avoided. And if this were not enough, some of the later plays will be found to furnish a more direct testimony for the contradiction between professional requirement and natural inclination. The actor

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[39] See, Candra., I. 26.[17-18]. Cakora dictates to the maid as follows: 'जइ अत्तणो छइल्लगं दंसेदुं ववसिदा सि ता जमअं कादव्वं, मलआणिलो वण्णिदव्वो, सद्धरा अ वुत्तं ।'

The verse that follows fulfils these characteristics.

[40] Cf. Viddha., III. The maid Sulakṣaṇā reports: '...देवेण ...देवी...भणिदा जधा सुंदरि मा विसण्णा होइ, जादो गंधव्ववेअविअक्खणो साहीणो जेव्व बम्हणो...।'

Later, the Vidūṣaka himself declares: 'जइ अहं पिङ्गलिआवल्लहो गन्धव्ववेअविअक्खणो रक्खको चिट्ठामि...।'

[41] Cf. Viddha., IV. 17:

भज्जा दासो अ पुत्तो अ णिद्धणा सअला वि ते ।
जं ते समधिअच्छंति जस्स ते तस्स ते धणं ॥

Inspite of the sarcastic compliment of the Dūta (अहो स्मृतिवैशारद्यं महाराजनमैसच्चिवस्य चारायणस्य ।), it is worth remembering that the verse, in Sanskrit form, is quoted in Śābarabhāṣya on Mīmānsāsūtras, VI. i. 12. The verse is found, with slight variations, in Manu, VIII. 416, and Mbh. Udyogaparvan, 33. 66.

[42] Cf. Karpūra., II. 32.[1-2] (HOS, p. 55): 'भो सुत्तआरो तुमं । अहं उण वित्तिआरो भविअ वित्थरेण वण्णेमि ।'

[43] See, Karṇa., IV. 12.[6]: 'एसो संपत्तो भट्टा समं बम्भणविडेण ।'

Vidūṣaka, whose real name is Romanthaka, appears in the prologue of *Adbhutadarpaṇa* and is instructed to play the role of Mahodara, a witty associate and a priest-cum-minister of Rāvaṇa.[44] Rājaśekhara's Kapiñjala expresses his disgust for having to play the fool. He is fed up with the atmosphere in a royal harem where a maid and a Brahmin are treated as on the same par. It is like 'mixing wine and a cow's holy products together, like putting glass and jewel side by side.' He thinks it more honourable to be away from such royal houses, and to serve one's family. He gives notice of quitting his position. He suggests that anyone, even a maid, could be put in his professional role and given the badge and livery of the Vidūṣaka.[45]

The Vidūṣaka in the classical plays is shown to be a genuine friend of the hero. But in some of these later plays, their relations appear to have become a little formal; so that the Vidūṣaka treats the hero as his master. Vaikhānasa addresses the hero, in *Kaumudīmahotsava*, as 'master and friend',[46] Kapiñjala addresses the king by the formal title 'Deva'.[47]

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[44] See, Adbhuta., Prologue, the words of the Sūtradhāra: 'सखे रोमन्थक, अद्य किल लङ्केश्वरनर्मसुहृदो महोदरस्य भूमिका निष्प्रमादमभिनेतव्या इति प्रागेव दत्तं ते मोदकपारितोषिकम् ।'

[45] Cf. Karpūra., act I (HOS, pp. 19-22.):

(i) 'ईदिसस्स राअउलस्स भद्दं भोदु जहिं चेडिआ बम्हणेण समसीसिआए दीसदि मइरा पञ्चगव्वं च एक्कसिं भण्डए करीअदि कच्चं माणिक्कं च समं आहरणे पउञ्जीअदि ।' (p. 19).

(ii) 'ईदिसं राअउलं दूरे वन्दीअदि जहिं दासी बम्हणेण समं पाडिसिद्धिं करेदि । ता अज्जप्पहुदि णिअवसुंधराबम्हणीए चलणसुस्सूसओ भविअ घरे ज्जेव चिट्ठिस्सं ।' (pp. 21-22).

(iii) 'ण हु ण हु आगमिस्सं । अण्णो को वि पिअवअस्सो अण्णेसीअदु । एसा वा दुट्ठदासी लम्बकुच्चं टप्परकण्णं पडिसीसअं दइअ मह ठाणे करीअदु । अहं एक्को मुदो तुम्हाणं मज्झे तुम्हे उण वरिससदं जीवध ।' (p. 22).

[46] Cf. Kaumudī., III. 5.[3]: 'जं भट्टिवअस्सो आणवेदि ।'

[47] Cf. Karpūra., II. 41.[6]: 'ता लच्छीसहअरो खणं चिट्ठदु देवो जाव अहं सिसिरोवआरसामग्गिं संपादेमि ।' (p. 59).

And again, II. 47.[3]: 'भणामि जइ देवो ण कुप्पदि ।' (p. 66).

The plays of Rājaśekhara give an unmistakable impression that the Vidūṣaka is a decent Brahmin, a man of family, who is called upon to play a professional fool, and that the job often involves a compromising position for him. Had this fact not appeared actually in the plays, the contradiction in the Vidūṣaka's character could perhaps have been spared. Apparently, the contradiction was too strong to be suppressed. Valuable as this information, therefore, is as social data, it also focusses to a sharp point the cleavage that ultimately ruined the Vidūṣaka as a comic character.

The mechanical treatment dried up the springs of fresh humour. The contradiction between stupidity and sanity ceased to be a comic incongruity and became, in its cut-and-dried juxtaposition, a contradiction in characterization. The drama showed too plainly that the foolishness of the Vidūṣaka was only professional and had nothing to do with his real character. It was one thing to clad the character in motley and cram his brain with wisdom. It was another thing to show that the motley was a false disguise.

There is no doubt that the Vidūṣaka was dead long before he had any chance to grow. When Kālidāsa dismisses the Vidūṣaka from the scene of action, subjects him to a pounding that nearly kills him, he is indicating a symbolical death of the Vidūṣaka. When Harṣa drives the Vidūṣaka out, with his face blackened by a maid, it is another indication of the exit and eclipse of the Vidūṣaka from the stage. And when Rājaśekhara shows his Vidūṣaka giving notice of quitting his office, out of sheer disgust, and suggests that a maid may wear his motley, it is proof of the deterioration of comic business.

If the Vidūṣaka continues to appear in the later Sanskrit plays and in the Prakrit *Saṭṭakas*, it is neither a sign of development nor of revival. Continuity of existence is no sign of growth. It is very often a break between decadence and death. The continuity is due to the sheer force of tradition, which has

always proved stronger than reason or propriety. The maid in Rājaśekhara's play asks, 'How can convention be snapped'?[48] And Rudradāsa's Cakora observes, 'The mind of even the wise moves in the blind groove of tradition!'[49]

The Vidūṣaka still continues in native tradition. But now he has become a real Choric character. He appears with the Sūtradhāra in the prologue, as in the Koṅkana tradition; or he takes on himself the real function of a Sūtradhāra and introduces a play and comments on the characters and on the play, as in the Kerala tradition.[50]

Thus, the history of the Vidūṣaka is a tale of gradual decadence. But it was fortunate that the decline of the Vidūṣaka did not seal the fate of humour. The *Prahasana* type of drama could keep the tradition of humour alive in virtue of new and varied comic characters that it represented. The modern vernacular drama arose out of the ancient indigenous tradition. But it grew under the inspiring influence of Shakespeare and Molière. It turned to contemporary comic types and to the comedy of Manners. And humour could blossom once again.

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[48] Karpūra., II. 27 d: 'रूढीअ का खण्डणा।' (HOS, p. 51). There is a double meaning involved: The Comm. (KM, No. 4, p. 53) explains, 'रूढियोंगमपहरति इति यथा रूढेर्योगापेक्षया प्राबल्यं, तथा सहज-सौन्दर्यस्य अपि इति भावः।'

[49] Candra., I. 29.[1]: 'अहो, पंडिआगं वि बुद्धी अंधपरंपरं अणुवट्टइ...।'

[50] See, K. R. Pisharoti, *Kerala Theatre*, JAU, Vol. III, No. 2, Oct. 1934.

XV

DECADENCE: A DIAGNOSIS

What led to the decadence of the Vidūṣaka? Prof. Jagirdar thinks that the cause of the Vidūṣaka's deterioration is his 'increasing association with the menials of the harem'. 'Stupidity is the price' that he paid to gain access in the world of harem. 'With the gradual change in life and manners he was first stereotyped and then taken to pieces where all the active elements were reduced to dull technicalities'.[1]

It is, however, not the social but the literary factors that must be regarded as relevant in accounting for the gradual decadence that surrounded the Vidūṣaka as a *dramatic character*. First, then, is the failure to understand the essence of a comic character and the principle behind humour. A type is bound to wear out soon. A comic character is, no doubt, a symbol of a social type, or of a prevalent vice. But it will not survive for long, unless it is portrayed in literature as a distinct character having an individuality of its own. The later dramatists copied the mechanical type and, while doing it, failed to portray typical individual characters.

There is nothing wrong with stock characters, in point of principle. The early Greek comedy has the types. Aristophanes has stock characters. But Aristophanes was aware that 'the weakness of any contemporary social life is as much in evidence in men's characters as in current customs and institutions'. He used his plays for the purpose of 'fighting against war, the corruption of the jury courts, against the excesses of stoicism and dramatic innovations, and against the imperialistic ambitions'.[2] But Aristophanes had the true instinct of a dramatist.

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[1] Jagirdar, *Drama in Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 70, 71.

[2] See, J. Feibleman, *In Praise of Comedy*, pp. 28, 31.

He did not encrust stock characters on his plays; he created characteristic types in his plays. The greatness of Shakespeare is that he 'habitually creates not types but men and women, who are as real to us to-day as when Shakespeare made them', and who, consequently, 'have acquired in our companionable affections a historical as well as a dramatic being'.[3]

Writing about the character of Gomukha created by Guṇāḍhya in his *Bṛhatkathā*, Lacoté says, "It is strange that posterior writers should not have attemped to turn it into account. No doubt, we find some touches, recalling Gomukha, in the Vidūṣaka, and more especially in the Viṭa, of the theatrical pieces, but those conventional parts can in no way be compared with it."[4]

The complaint is real and justified. But what is stranger still is that it was not necessary for the dramatists to go to new sources for guidance. Kālidāsa had given in the characters of the Senāpati and the police-officers new types that could have been easily exploited for comic purposes. And Śūdraka had opened up literally a world of comic characters: the slave Ceṭa, who delivers his message not before he has propounded a riddle for Maitreya; the villain Śakāra, whose humour runs as wild as his lust and is as crude and subtle as his cunning; and that delightful vagabond Darduraka, for whom gambling is a kingdom without a throne; who unfolds his threadbare garment and refolds it with princely indifference to his poverty. What a wealth and variety of comic characters Śūdraka had created by the side of the conventional Vidūṣaka!

The *Prahasana* play evinces a true comic spirit. A piece of a very high order is an early *Prahasana*, *Bhagavadajjukīya* of Bodhāyana, which contains the character of a pupil depicted as a Vidūṣaka. But the real fun here is provided by the messenger

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[3] Gordon, *Shakespearian Comedy*, p. 9.

[4] Lacoté, *Essay on Guṇāḍhya and the Bṛhatkathā*; English translation by T. A. Bard, Bangalore, 1923; p. 225.

of Yama who picks up the soul of a wrong courtesan to be carried to the abode of Yama. When he discovers his blunder, he finds that the life of the courtesan has been resuscitated by a Yogin who has put his own soul in her body, while the courtesan's soul is lying in his hand! He temporarily puts the courtesan's soul, therefore, in the lifeless body of the Yogin. This results in a supreme comedy of the Yogin speaking the language of love like the courtesan, and the courtesan uttering ponderous words of wisdom like the Yogin!

The later *Prahasanas* have many characters similar to those in Greek Comedy, besides the classical figure of the Vidūṣaka; although some of them descend to downright vulgarity and brook no ban on obscenity. *Laṭakamelaka* has a doctor Jantuketu who, in order to extract a fish-bone from the throat of Madanamañjarī, suggests that a rope may be tied round her neck and pulled![5] A comic doctor appears also in *Hāsyārṇava*. The doctor's name is Vyādhisindhu, 'Ocean of diseases'. His remedies are aweful. It is found that the eyes of an aged harlot, Bandhurā, are affected by a blinding disease called *timira*. King Anayasindhu ('Ocean of bad Policy') who is present at the harlot's house, reproaches the doctor for Bandhurā's ailment. The doctor prescribes that her eye-balls may be pierced with a red-hot iron-rod, so that when the eyes are non-existent the disease will have no scope whatever! The Nāyikā Mṛgāṅkalekhā is unable to control her laughter and remarks that a physician's examination should normally begin with the eyes of a patient; how can removal of eyes help a doctor, not to speak of the patient? The doctor finding himself ridiculed even by a harlot takes himself off. There is also a comic General in this *Prahasana*. This General has captured a female bee drinking the wine of flowers. He clad

[5] Read: जन्तुकेतुः—(सगर्वम्) दृष्टप्रत्ययस्तावदुपचारः। पूर्वमुष्ट्रस्य गले कर्कटी लग्नासीत्। तत्रास्मत्पित्रा कुटुम्बकेतुना निरक्षरेणोष्ट्रस्य मुखं बन्धयित्वा दृढतररज्जुभिराकृष्टम्। ततस्तन्मुखाद्विगलिता कर्कटी। तदेतस्या अपि मुखं बन्धयित्वा किमिति नाकृष्यते। *Laṭakamelaka*, KM. No. 20.

himself in full armour, took a force of four soldiers and, cutting the head of the culprit with his sharp sword, neatly effected her capture with heavy leather ropes! About his courage he announces that his senses were paralysed on seeing the red lac-dye on a woman's feet which he mistook for blood. The darkness on a New moon day can send him into a swoon. Is it necessary to say what will happen on a battle-field in the presence of a blood-thirsty enemy?[6] The hetaera, the barber and the police are other characters that receive comic treatment in the *Prahasanas.*

But even in portraying the Vidūṣaka, Bhāsa and Kālidāsa and Śūdraka had blazed a trail for their successors. Adopting the convention as they did, they created individual characters and not mechanical types. Santuṣṭa, Gautama and Maitreya are foolish Brahmins, ignorant, cowardly, gluttonous; they have even a physical defect—that crude stock-in-trade for comic laughter. And yet, what distinct personality, each one of them possesses! It is the individuality, even within the conventional bounds, that makes them real comic characters.

The classical poets did something more: They showed that the Vidūṣaka, inspite of his being a conventional comic figure, did not need to possess a monopoly for humour. Bhāsa, for instance, creates situations which are full of dramatic irony and out of which genuine humour trickles like a pure stream. Śūdraka's gallery of comic characters has a freshness undreamt of in mechanical portraits. For, his characters look upon life itself as a comedy and its unexpected experiences as occasions for amused laughter. Kālidāsa touches a still more delicate vein and expresses through a playful Priyaṁvadā a refined

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6 cf. सद्यो दत्तमलक्तकं पदयुगे दृष्ट्वाङ्गनाया रतौ
रक्तभ्रान्तिवशाद् भयेन नितरां म्लानेन्द्रियो मेदिनीम् ।
पश्यन्दर्शनिशातमिस्रनिकरच्छन्नामिवाशां तथा
मूर्च्छेयं भुवि का कथा समरतो रक्तास्यसक्तद्विषाम् ॥

Hāsyārṇava, (Calcutta, 2nd ed.), I. 43.

type of humour, which is irresistible for its naughtiness and charm.

It is, therefore, a matter for surprise and regret that the later dramatists did not pick up this trail, and allowed the character of the Vidūṣaka to deteriorate into a wooden caricature of the stupid Brāhmaṇa.

Secondly, the depiction of stock character deteriorating into sheer caricature had the result of replacing the 'Critical' Fool by the 'Mechanical' Fool. The motley critic could have had a freshness of wit and a wider room even within the precincts of his limited world. But the fool, who was only a butt of ridicule, was in unchanging circumstances. His jokes and the jokes about him had to be repeated. Continuous repetition chilled their comic spirit. Too early for Sanskrit drama, the Vidūṣaka became a mechanical and a dead type. There was no attempt made either to change the type or the circumstances about the character in order to discover a fresh source for comic laughter. The Vidūṣaka never could shed his caste, his creed or associations. He did not drop even the primitive attribute of physical ugliness. The humour of the Vidūṣaka, therefore, became as mechanical as the type he represented. What was worse, it turned back to the primitive level of abuse, practical joke and physical deformity, inspite of the refinement and touching human element which the classical poets had already introduced in their portrayal of individual comic characters.

Thirdly, it is necessary to recognise the unimaginative character of the dramatic theory. If the dramatists are to be blamed for their inability to rise above convention and for ignoring the lead of classical poets, as they must be, the later theorists must share an even larger proportion of blame: The theorists who followed Bharata merely repeated, paraphrased and occasionally expanded the ideas that Bharata had already given. In doing this they failed to give a new lead to the rising dramatists; and they also failed to take note of what great writers like Kālidāsa and Śūdraka were doing, or had done, in

the field of drama. It was all right for Bharatamuni to have formulated the rules for the composition and production of drama. It was equally right that they were respected. But if the classical poets had shown new vistas of comic representation, it was expected that a later theorist, if not a later poet, would notice the literary phenomena and give a progressive direction to dramatic writing and production. But the theory ceased to grow and warped, in its turn, the growth of comic character.

Fourthly, the sanctity of theory is a factor that is to be reckoned with. To Bharata must go the credit of formulating a dramatic theory for the first time; and to him, paradoxically enough, must be traced the tyranny of literary convention, with the implied principle of social propriety. The absence of a formal distinction between comedy and tragedy, and the prohibition of tragedy, brought a needless restriction on the range and scope of humour. The drama moved in a set and narrow groove. And although Bharata recognised the *Prakaraṇa* and *Prahasana* types, they did not somehow command the same respect as did the *Nāṭaka* form, which continued to be the norm of dramatic writing. The comic characters which Kālidāsa and Śūdraka had created did not find favour with the sophisticated drama. The Vidūṣaka also did not outgrow the rules of literary and social propriety, which Bharata had prescribed for him. Bharata's accent on 'entertainment' had only the effect of circumscribing the social range of Sanskrit drama. Had it not been so, the *Prakaraṇa* and the *Prahasana* drama could have blossomed into a Comedy of Manners. The line of Śūdraka would not have been broken. Shaw finds 'from Molière to Oscar Wilde a line of comic playwrights....who were in revolt against falsehood and imposture...and were not only chastening morals by ridicule but...clearing our minds of cant, and thereby showing an uneasiness in the presence of error which is the surest symptom of intellectual vitality'.[7] Such vitality was

[7] Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, Preface, p. xciv.

denied to Sanskrit drama. No one thought that entertainment was not inconsistent with a social purpose, especially in the delineation of humour, even in high drama.

Finally, if literary convention cramped the creative effort, the tyranny of public taste forced it into popular, well-worn groove. Bhavabhūti had shown the boldness and wisdom of dropping the dead Vidūṣaka and substituting it by new characters like Kāmandakī, Makaranda [8] and the playful pupil, Saudhātaki. [9] But he had to pay the price of contemporary neglect. It seems that the popular taste was satisfied with the lifeless Vidūṣaka. The later dramatists, who had neither the imagination nor the genius to rise above the mechanical formula and infuse new life into drama, fell an easy victim to cheap popularity. The Vidūṣaka was dead; although humour is deathless.

If only the Vidūṣaka could have grown! The unconscious cryptic wit of the Vidūṣaka could have raised him with his motley into an independent Touchstone—" observing, mocking, detached from the main action, yet not completely detached, because identifying himself with the rest of the characters "! [10] Or, if the childlike stupidity of a Vasantaka, who no sooner does he begin to tell a story than he confounds the names of the city and the king, and the amusing pretences of a Santuṣṭa, that he cannot produce tears and that he is a delicate damsel, could have been taken out and allowed to grow on their own, a lively, healthy, mirthful Puck might perhaps have been born!

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[8] In Mālatī. On Makaranda's impersonation of Mālatī, and his duping of Nandana, J. T. Parikh's comment is, 'But unfortunately the lack of genuine sense of humour in Bhavabhūti comes in the way, and as a farcical bye-plot it ends in failure.' (*Vidūṣaka, op. cit.*, p. 38.) Is it a question of literary opinion or of literary judgment?

[9] In URC., act IV, Interlude.

[10] J. B. Priestley, *The English Comic Characters*, pp. 27-28.

But above all, if the incongruity, which is basic to a comic character, were fully employed to create " a man at once young and old, enterprising and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality, a knave without malice, a liar without deceipt ; and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier, without either dignity, decency or honour : "[11]—if, " the bliss of freedom gained in humour " could have been exhibited in reducing everything to absurdity ",[12]—we would have been in the presence of a monumental figure : Falstaff !

Alas, this did not happen ! We are robbed of great comic characters. And we miss the Comedy of Characters as well as the Comedy of Manners.

But let us remember Santuṣṭa who is amusing and naughty, and can claim affinity with Puck on the one hand and, by his devotion, with Maitreya, on the other hand. And Maitreya, who is " a butt and a wit, a humorist and a man of humour, a Touchstone and a laughing stock, a jester and a jest ",[13] who resembles Falstaff in being a bundle of incongruities, and is distinguished from him in humane nobility. And Gautama, whose contradictions are superficial and yet, who is irrepressible in his comic domination. These Vidūṣakas will linger in our memory. The Sanskrit drama can be legitimately proud of them. If the Vidūṣaka's popularity did not decline on the Indian stage even after the comic character was virtually dead, the credit, I think, must go to these figures and their creators.

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[11] Maurice Morgan, *The Character of Falstaff*; Shakespeare Criticism, The World's Classics, CCXII, 1916 ; p. 203.

[12] A. C. Bradley, Oxford Lectures, p. 262.

[13] Maurice Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

Part II

"THE FEAST OF FOOLS"

I

VASANTAKA

(in *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa*)

वसन्तको भवान् ननु ।

—Yaugandharāyaṇa, in Act III.

Vasantaka appears in the third act in a beggarly guise declaiming in unpolished language. His thoughts and speech centre round the *modakas* which he has received at some temple along with a gift of gold coins. He displays the characteristic greed of a seasoned glutton for his gift of food, and admires the smell of his own belching. He feels a pitiful concern for the loss of the sweets. But he is prepared to collect his wits and his doubtful courage for investigating the lost eatables.

He is a Brahmin which, no doubt, has entitled him to the gift at the temple. Luckily there is no occasion for him to parade his Brahminhood or face the test of learning expected in a Brahmin. He can, therefore, use his caste to defend his privileged rights and cry sacrilege at the madman, Unmattaka, whom he suspects to have stolen his *modakas*. Once he is in possession of them, thanks to the intervention of the Śramaṇaka, he is satisfied. He is ready to recite the benedictory texts for the Śramaṇaka and make a further gift of his own gift. His unashamed Brahminhood brooks no insult or discomfiture. He is quite content with the recovery of his lost possession.

The Vidūṣaka puts on a brave show of courage for some time. Seriously concerned with the fact that a Brahmin like him is robbed of his lawful *modakas*, he rushes at the madman Unmattaka, who is running towards him like a foamy, dirty monsoon-stream of street-water. Vasantaka stops the madman in his flight, threatens to split his head with his own wooden

stick and then proceeds to argue with him. However, the Brahmin is not noted for personal valour. It is rather the animal fidelity to the bone in possession that has goaded Vasantaka to the rough encounter. He shifts his positions immediately: From the brave threat of a broken head he descends, through the ethical appeal to the virtue of respecting the right of other people's belongings and to the deciding rod of a priest's authority, to mere weeping and the old wife's tale of the Brahmin's sacrosanct dignity! But all this show of sheltered privileges is completely exposed by Śramaṇaka, the Buddhist mendicant. The Śramaṇaka takes hold of the situation, threatens Unmattaka with a curse, spits on the *modakas*; and thus, having asserted his power, advises Vasantaka either to give up the *modakas* as they might cause consumption or hand them over to himself. Vasantaka cowers before this menacing demonstration. He has to acknowledge the might of the Śramaṇaka and swallow his own boastful utterances. The Brahmin cuts a poor figure indeed.

Obviously the courage of Vasantaka was of a doubtful quality. His wit, however, is not so uncertain. The way he accounts for the loss of his *modakas* and successively dismisses the nagging beggar, the dog and the wayfarers as the probable pilferers, evinces correct logic. For a moment he is deceived by the picture in Śiva's temple: He thinks that the *modakas* placed in a cocoanut-shell must have been appropriated by Śiva, because of the fond connection of the shell with the goddess Kātyāyanī. But when he realises that the *modakas* at the feet of Śiva are only a painted picture, he has the resourceful humour to appreciate the skill of the painter and the choice of bright colours used by him.

His speech, however, is uncouth. Perhaps like his dress, his words are tattered and uncivil. Once he actually uses an ugly simile when he compares the smell of his breath to that of the wind passing from the bladder of a pig.

Vasantaka has no opportunity to be by the side of King

Udayana, because the latter is in prison. But neither does he assist Udayana in his new-found love for Vāsavadattā nor does he approve of it. He has his own reasons for letting the King down : Udayana's love-affair was apt to be a serious obstacle in the execution of the planned strategy. Hence, he shrewdly remarks that Udayana has converted his prison into a pleasure-park ; and his suggestion to abandon the king is born as much out of the skin-saving selffishness as out of the practical considerations about the success of the strategy planned for Udayana's release.

The minister Yaugandharāyaṇa, however, dismisses rightly the suggestion made by the Vidūṣaka. " You are Vasantaka indeed ! " says he ; ' this is perhaps to be expected from your clownish nature. But how could Udayana, our master, be left to his uncertain fate ? '

The minister is led to renew his resolve and take a second vow of releasing his master along with Vāsavadattā from his imprisonment. This is precisely the function that Vasantaka is expected to fulfil in the play.

II

VASANTAKA
(in *Svapnavāsavadatta*)

भवांस्तु मुखरः ।

—Udayana, in Act IV.

A tremendous fire broke out at Lāvāṇaka, a frontier village in the kingdom of Udayana, where he was enjoying himself in the beloved company of his queen Vāsavadattā. The fire took the toll of the palatial residence; and, although some of the inmates were luckily away when the flames licked the palace, Vāsavadattā was consumed in the holocaust and the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa lost his own life in a vain effort to save the queen. Such was at least the appearance of things. The later developments brought a welcome change in the life of Udayana and of those connected with him. But the events at Lāvāṇaka were too fresh and terrible to be easily forgotten.

Even Vasantaka, the Vidūṣaka, could not forget how all of them were caught ' in the whirlpool of calamity ' from which no escape seemed possible at that moment. The joyous and festive life in the palace at Magadha could not blunt the recollection of that agonising experience. The only fortunate thing was that it was all over and that the sinking souls had found the shore of sheltered life. Naturally, Vasantaka turns gratefully to the new change that had come over in his life. Thanks also to Udayana's marriage with the Magadha princess Padmāvatī and the festivities that followed, Vasantaka could cling to this new-found happiness, which must have been all the more enjoyable on the background of the terrible calamity.

It is in this mood that we meet the Vidūṣaka when he makes his first appearance in the fourth act. The Vidūṣaka's position

as a companion of the bridegroom was enough to secure him a comfortable existence. That he was a Brahmin must have added to his personal enjoyment.

Life in the Magadha palace was a treat. One had to live in palatial residences only ; bathe at the pools in the inner apartments; and consume quantities of delicate, delightful, sweet dishes. What better allurements could the heavens afford, except perhaps the company of nymphs ? But who cared for them ? Vasantaka is quite happy in this local, de-nymphed paradise and is thoroughly enjoying himself. For him good food and personal comfort are the very spice of life. About the latter he is now so sensitive that he is not prepared to sit even for a moment on the heated slab of stone in the Pramada garden. He immediately asks Udayana to enter the cool shady bower which he personally prefers in the heat of an autumnal noon. He is similarly annoyed by the hovering bees ; and had it not been for the sentimental intervention of Udayana, he would have loved to put those buzzing insects in their proper place with his raised stick. Naturally, the Vidūṣaka does not like any encroachment on his personal comfort.

About food he has fortunately not to worry in the least. What is especially remarkable is that Udayana's new bride is always up with a dish loaded with delicacies and, with " Where is the noble Vasantaka ? ", is solicitously inquiring after him. Vasantaka has every reason to prefer the charming Padmāvatī to the excitable Vāsavadattā.

In this heavenly existence Vasantaka has only one grievance : His poor stomach is too lousy to do full justice to the good food that is so generously heaped upon him. He suspects a derangement of wind and blood, perhaps gout. To the maid who comes to inquire if Udayana has finished his bath so that she could bring flowers and unguents, Vasantaka replies, " Bring everything but food. " This sudden aversion to eating is due to the fact that Vasantaka has completely ruined his digestion :

"Like the cuckoo's eye revolving in both the sockets," to quote his words to the maid, "there is a terrible whirling in my belly." The maid who must have watched the glutton gobble up enormous quantities of food is glad at this sad confession. Vasantaka is surely paying the price of his gluttony. And though he may not be prepared to admit his weakness for food, he admits that he has lost his happiness. For, what is happiness if it is not freedom from disease and capacity to enjoy a full meal? The greedy fool's horizon is very limited no doubt; but he has unconsciously spoken a truth, the wisdom of which cannot be mistaken.

This outlook on life bespeaks a comfort-loving, lazy nature; and it is a major clue to the character of this Vasantaka. If the Vidūṣaka's dissertation on food and digestion were an outward expression of this outlook, his drawling conversation and the verbal lapses in his speech are suggestive of the laziness which the habit of overeating has permanently induced.

Adjusting his personal comfort to the extent it is possible in a given situation, Vasantaka opens up drawling topics of conversation. He asks Udayana, when they are seated in the Pramada garden, as to whom he loves more, Vāsavadattā or Padmāvatī. For him it is perhaps an idle talk, probably meant to kill time only and to keep Udayana's mind from wandering towards gloomy thoughts. But for Udayana it is an embarrassing question; for, although he is frankly appreciative of Padmāvatī's charming nature, his heart is still with Vāsavadattā. Udayana, therefore, evades a direct answer. The show of bravery which Vasantaka makes and the oath of friendship under which he binds Udayana down to yield a reply to his question, are so comical that Udayana, after reluctantly confessing his love for Vāsavadattā, is driven to impose an identical situation on Vasantaka and extract his reply to the same question. Padmāvatī, who at this moment was standing behind a bower, could not repress the comment that her husband had permitted himself to don the Vidūṣaka's cap. Of course,

it is all idle fun for Vasantaka. And his own reply which expresses his preference for Padmāvatī, because she feeds him with sumptuous meals, is an indication of his love for food and creature comfort.

While waiting for the arrival of the ailing Padmāvatī in the Samudragṛha and feeling a little drowsy, Udayana asks Vasantaka to tell him a story. Vasantaka begins to talk in a drawling tone about Ujjayinī and its famous baths. The topic he has touched in an idle way strikes, again, an intimate chord in Udayana's heart. Vasantaka is quite willing to change his story: "There was a city", he begins, "by name Brahmadatta; in it there was a king called Kāṁpilya". Indeed! The idle tone of narration is perfectly in keeping with the verbal laspe in which Vasantaka has mixed up the names of the city and of the king! On a previous occasion too, Vasantaka had confused the crow's eye with that of the cuckoo; for, it is the former that travels from one socket to the other according to a popular belief. Here, Udayana corrects him immediately; but there, the maid to whom Vasantaka was addressing must have considered it useless to rectify the lazy lapses of the idle talker and spoil their fun.

Besides being a glutton the Vidūṣaka is a coward also. His sense of fear may partially be connected with his irrepressible desire for personal comfort. He is afraid of the bees because they destroy his comfort; and he can be brave before them. However, his fear appears to be genuinely connected with his timid nature. He puts up a brave show before Udayana; but he lowers his colours the moment Udayana suggests physical opposition. Later on, if Udayana yields to him it is only to humour him; for he knows what power this Mahābrāhmaṇa possesses. Vasantaka talks disapprovingly about Vāsavadattā only because he believes that she is dead and there is no possibility of retribution. But a positive proof of his cowardly nature is to be found in the way he slinks before a garland rolling on the

ground near the entrance of the Samudragṛha, which (garland) he mistakes in the fading light of the evening for a serpent.

Vasantaka is not really stupid inspite of his verbal lapses and his confusion of names. Especially in regard to Udayana, whose boon companion he is, he is very watchful and does not fail him at a depressing or at an embarrassing moment. Knowing that Udayana's mind is still obsessed with love for Vāsavadattā, he makes a conscious attempt to produce a diversion for his friend's melancholy. He directs Udayana to the Pramada garden; he draws his attention to the beauty of the blossoms, to the row of flying cranes spread out in the clear autumnal sky like the extended arm of Balarāma. From the picked Śephālikā blossoms he correctly infers that Padmāvatī must be present in the Pramada garden; he institutes a careful search for her. And when all these attempts fail he invents a funny situation to hold Udayana's mind. Although the situation ends rather disastrously for Udayana, on account of a personal emotional factor, there is no doubt that Vasantaka could induce, temporarily at least, the spirit of fun in his gloomy companion. Vasantaka is equally ready to humour the mood of Udayana: He abandons the idea of punishing the inconvenient bees; he is willing to tell stories in order to tempt the soothing sleep; he is even prepared to argue with Udayana by offering a plausible explanation for the vision of Vāsavadattā which Udayana believes to be a reality and not a dream. He is as ready to run errands for Udayana as he is to give him personal assistance. He conveys the news of Padmāvatī's ailment and takes Udayana to her bedside. When Udayana is experiencing an emotional breakdown, he runs to his assistance not only by hurriedly carrying water to wash his tear-stained face but also by explaining to Padmāvatī, who has unexpectedly confronted them, that the dust of the Kāśa flowers was responsible for Udayana's tears. Further, he successfully terminates this embarrassing situation by suggesting that it was time for Udayana's courtesy-call on king Darśaka. Vasantaka's anxiety to curtail inconvenient

explanations elicits an appreciative comment from Padmâvatī: "Even the attendants of a courteous person are themselves full of courtesy".

There may be nothing brilliant about this Vasantaka. But although the timid glutton has ruined his digestion he nevertheless has succeeded in being a cheerful, obliging companion to his royal master.

III

SANTUṢṬA

(in *Avimāraka*)

गोष्ठीषु हास्यः समरेषु यौधः
शोके गुरुः साहसिकः परेषु ।
महोत्सवो मे हृदि किं प्रलापै—
र्द्विधा विभक्तं खलु मे शरीरम् ॥

—Avimāraka, at IV. 27.

The name of the Vidūṣaka in *Avimāraka* is Santuṣṭa, ('Contented'), rather an unusual name. But such is the irony of life that Santuṣṭa has very little cause to be contented and happy. His love for food, his pretensions to Vedic learning, the simplicity of his nature and, above all, his devotion to Avimāraka, all leave him in an unenviable state of grief, much to the amusement of others.

A maid, Candrikā, is wandering in the city and enjoying herself. She happens to see Santuṣṭa. Tickled by the spirit of mischief, she decides to have fun out of him. She pretends to be talking loudly with a non-existing friend and says that she is in search of a Brahmin. Santuṣṭa, who is going out to see Avimāraka at the latter's residence, does not fail to catch the words of the maid. He immediately stops in front of her. Why is Candrikā seeking a Brahmin ? She wants to invite one for dinner, to be sure. But then does not the poor maid know that a real Brahmin is standing before her in person ? "Am I a Buddhist mendicant ?" asks Santuṣṭa in a tone of resentment. Candrikā points out that Santuṣṭa has no Vedic scholarship to speak of.....Is that so ? Provoked but enticed by the prospect of a meal, Santuṣṭa parades his vast ignorance before the maid and plays into her hands easily. Not being quite successful in

impressing her with his learning he shows his willingness to accept the food without the necessary fee due to a Brahmin. In his joy that the engagement is settled on this compromise, he allows the maid to inspect his ring. This was exactly what the maid wanted. With the ring in her possession she pretends to see Avimāraka coming by the way; and, as Santuṣṭa turns his face to that direction, she vanishes into the crowd in the street! Deprived both of his dinner and of his ring, the fool stands gaping at the crowds, duped in broad daylight. He shouts and runs after her. But his feet are too numb to move on the street 'like that of a person attacked by an elephant in his dream'. Too late does he realise that the slut, whose unrighteous character he knew well, has deceived him after all! Alas! his weakness for food has dragged Santuṣṭa into misery.

The painful memory of this deception is apt to linger in the mind of Santuṣṭa. Avimāraka has been waiting impatiently for Santuṣṭa, outside the city, to communicate to him the joyful news that he has found out a way to meet princess Kuraṅgī. When Avimāraka questions Santuṣṭa, in the following scene, about his late arrival, Santuṣṭa remarks, "You appear to be brooding over the same thoughts, day and night, like a Brahmin duped by an invitation for dinner!" But true to his tribe, this Brahmin cannot relinquish so easily his love for food. It colours his impression of the city seen in the glow of the setting sun: The white mansions are like balls of curds and the sun's light reflected on them is like a coating of sweet treacle! When he finds Kuraṅgī sad and weeping and Nalinikā, her maid, urging her to pick up the materials of toilette, Santuṣṭa says, "What is the use of these materials when she is weeping? She is hungry. Hurry up the food. I will be the first to take my seat." Nalinikā may think that the joke is inopportune; but it reveals the true Brāhmaṇa, no doubt.

Only, the deception that he has suffered has taught Santuṣṭa to be rather wary about gifts. Picking up the hint and wishing to leave Avimāraka and Kuraṅgī to their privacy, Nalinikā is

trying to drag Santuṣṭa away. Santuṣṭa misses the hint and refuses to move unless he is promised a dinner, which is always 'desirable to a guest'. Nalinikā promises to give all her ornaments. Santuṣṭa says, "Put them in my hands. Bile does not disappear merely by uttering the word ghee."

Santuṣṭa is a Brahmin because he was born one. Of course, he has some acquaintance with the system of education; otherwise he could not have compared Avimāraka running for the sight of Kuraṅgī to a boy who, after finishing his education, is impatient to go home. But really he is quite innocent of any learning; though in his Brahminical pride he would never admit it. When Candrikā held back the invitation because he was *avaidika,* Santuṣṭa threw an angry challenge in her face and at once started reciting learned words:
"There is a scientific book on Dramaturgy called *Rāmāyaṇa*!" He had learnt five verses from it before the year was out! Staggered by this knowledge and the quickness of grasp, what could the poor maid do except admit that such power of intellect was only to be expected from the noble family to which Santuṣṭa belonged? But that is not all. Santuṣṭa tells her that he has not only learnt the verses but he knows their meaning as well! Besides, he can decipher letters too. Says he, "A Brahmin who can read the letters and also know their meaning is rare indeed." One would wish that Candrikā left him there. But the naughty maid holds up her ring and asks him to read the letters inscribed on it. For a moment Santuṣṭa is nonplussed. But he replies cheerfully, "Woman, these letters are not found in my book."

Santuṣṭa must have realised that he could not make a great impression on the maid. But what does it matter? Who could deny that he was a Brahmin? After all, one does not require much to be a Brahmin. Put on the sacred thread and you are a Brahmin. Wear a bark and you are a Raktapaṭa (Sanyāsin). Throw away all garments and you are a Śramaṇaka (Jain mendicant)! It is, therefore, easy for him to shout when

the inviolable dignity of the Brahmin is compromised by a maid dragging him away by force.

Santuṣṭa's behaviour on occasions appears to be rather stupid. He fails to appreciate the impatience of Avimāraka to establish a contact with his beloved Kuraṅgī. He attributes Kuraṅgī's tears to her being hungry. He does not see that Nalinikā is dragging him away with the only intention of leaving the lovers to themselves. But all this is meant for fun.

It must be remembered that Santuṣṭa displays sometimes a correct sense of observation. He warns Avimāraka about the risk involved in his romantic adventure by pointing out that the ministers of the king are crooked in their policy. He correctly guesses that Kuraṅgī has become emaciated on account of the pangs of separation. Like Avimāraka he, too, can appreciate the emaciated beauty of Kuraṅgī by comparing her to a new crescent moon. And when Avimāraka expresses surprise at the unexpected 'wisdom' of Santuṣṭa, he cooly remarks, "My friend, you laugh at me because we are constantly together. A stranger would not know the quality of my intelligence and would therefore praise me more. Hence, I avoid being intimate with any one in this city!" When Kuraṅgī calls him a 'laughing-stock', he reminds her that she was prepared to hang herself in all seriousness, but forgot all about it by the mere sound of thunder; and hence, was in no better company!

The truth seems to be that Santuṣṭa is very simple by nature. Candrikā could deceive him easily as much on account of his proverbial fondness for food as on account of the simplicity of his mind. Avimāraka shows him the magic ring and explains how it makes the wearer invisible to others. Santuṣṭa is so charmed that he tries the effect on himself and cries with glee like a child at the miracle.

The opinion of Candrikā, Kuraṅgī and of Avimāraka is that Santuṣṭa is a laughing-stock. But Santuṣṭa possesses the gift of laughing at himself and make others laugh with him. He

reduces his Brahminical dignity merely to the sacred thread. He produces excellent fun in Kuraṅgī's private apartment. On observing tears in Kuraṅgī's eyes he consoles her by saying, "I would fain weep with you. But the trouble is that my tears do not come out easily. When my father died I started crying with great determination and effort; but the tears did not come. How could I then produce tears for somebody else's anguish? Even then I will weep with you." A little later, Nalinikā refers to him as a 'man'. Santuṣṭa remarks, "This seems to be the speciality of the royal household. Otherwise, who could have seen me and said that I was a man?" He proclaims himself to be a maid by name Puṣkariṇī! And as Nalinikā drags him away by force he protests, "Please, don't. I am very delicate."

Santuṣṭa seems to have a genuine desire to make others happy even if it were at his own cost. This is especially true in his relation to Avimāraka for whom he shows a touching concern. A curse has descended upon Avimāraka turning him into an untouchable Śūdra and forcing him to live on the outskirts of the city. No member of the higher castes would even think of associating himself with a Śūdra without the risk of severe reproach and ex-communication from the privileged society. And yet Santuṣṭa is daily running this risk by his secret nightly visits to Avimāraka. "Wandering in the city during day time and despaired of any enjoyment I come", he says to Avimāraka, "like a common street-walker to rest by your side."

The fate of Avimāraka is a constant source of grief for Santuṣṭa. When he learns that Avimāraka has fallen in love with the daughter of king Kuntibhoja, he feels an additional pang of misery. He knows the devastating effect of love. The path of Avimāraka is crooked and jagged on account of his peculiar position. The king's advisers would come down upon him. And Avimāraka is himself rash like all lovers, though his prowess is well-known. Certainly misfortunes never come

singly. The thought of the gloomy Avimāraka seeking his own solitude fills him with great anxiety. He will not permit Avimāraka to enter Kuraṅgī's palace alone at night. He will not abandon his friend in any condition. He will stick to him like a shadow. It is only when Avimāraka explains to him that the rules permit only a single person to enter a stranger's house that Santuṣṭa gives his consent to Avimāraka and takes him to the house of his friend to await nightfall.

That secret meeting with Kuraṅgī cemented the bonds of love between the two lovers. But it also worsened Avimāraka's plight. Unable to meet her again, Avimāraka's thoughts are verging on suicide. He has left his home and has not come back for a pretty long time, so informs Avimāraka's mother. Santuṣṭa becomes gravely concerned about this tender prince, wandering in solitude, cruelly smitten by the God of love. But distress cannot daunt him, despair cannot paralyse him. "I will tread every inch of ground," he says with firm determination, "till I see the prince or his body. And if I don't succeed in finding him I will go to heaven to keep him company."

Avimāraka is himself aware of the noble, filial attachment of Santuṣṭa. He realises that in his own absence the poor Brahmin will perish. It was a grave mistake that he did not keep Santuṣṭa informed about his own movements. For, Santuṣṭa is—

> "Laughable in society, a fighter in conflicts,
> Preceptor in grief, in front of foes undaunted ;
> My heart's great festival..but these wordy bubbles
> Are enough! 'Tis my body in two divided."

When Avimāraka discovers Santuṣṭa sleeping under a tree after his exhausting tireless search, he rushes towards him joyfully and folds him in an affectionate embrace. It is the seal and symbol of true friendship.

IV

GAUTAMA

(in *Mālavikāgnimitra*)

अयमपरो कार्यान्तरसचिवोऽस्मानुपस्थितः ।

—The King, in Act I.

इयमस्य कामतन्त्रसचिवस्य नीतिः ।

—Irāvatī, in Act IV.

Gautama is a fool by profession and must, therefore, naturally wear the badge and livery of his office. He displays a remarkable efficiency in playing the fool. But his personality outgrows the uniform he wears.

He is probably ugly in appearance as the Vidūṣakas are supposed to be. He compliments a 'brown monkey' for frightening Dhāriṇī's younger sister and thereby saving an awkward situation in which the king found himself, when, while making love to Mālavikā, he was surprised by Irāvatī. Gautama uses the expression '*svapakṣa*' which punningly implies 'the king's party' as well as 'the monkey's partisan', Gautama himself.

Gautama is supposed to be timid. During the serpent-bite episode Agnimitra describes him sympathetically as 'timid by nature'. Irāvatī's maid Nipuṇikā knows that he is 'afraid of serpents'; and actually drops on him a stick 'as crooked as a serpent' when he is dozing, and gives him a nasty scare. Vasantaka in *Svapnavāsavadatta* mistook a garland for a serpent; Gautama mistakes a crooked stick for the same. But while Vasantaka had to be convinced of his error by the king, Gautama finds out his own mistake himself and laughs heartily over it. His words here supply a clue to the real facts about the earlier serpent-bite episode: Gautama had pricked his

fingers with a Ketakī thorn and pretended that he had been bitten by a serpent. He played the hoax so well, trembling all over, appealing to the king to take care of his old mother, beseeching the queen to forgive him for any offence he might have unconsciously given her, distrusting the skill even of the royal physician, in short, behaving like one who is in a grip of death, that the queen Dhāriṇī was scared into the belief that she would be personally responsible if the poor Brahmin died! He, who would laugh at his own momentary fear and play a frightening hoax so frightfully well, could hardly be imagined to be a coward in the conventional sense of the term. The Vidūṣaka in *Ratnāvalī* is unable to stand even an account of war. But here when Mālavikā trembles with fear at Parivrājikā's narration of the attack of the marauders, it is Gautama who steps forward to assure Mālavikā and calm her fears. It appears, therefore, that Gautama exhibits cowardice only professionally.

However, Gautama is truly fond of food. He gets up in the midst of the musical concert as soon as the bards announce the mid-day hour. It is meal-time. He quotes medical authority in support of strictly keeping the hour of the meal and asks the queen to hurry up with food and drink. He describes the king who is impatient to meet Mālavikā as a greedy but nervous bird hovering over the slaughter-house. If the king reminds him of the mission entrusted to him, he asks the king to remember that the inside of his belly is blazing like a furnance in a shop. Irāvatī's maid states that Gautama is given to filling his belly with *modakas* received in presents and compares him to a bull in a shop.

As is to be expected, Gautama is a Brahmin in name only. Irāvatī twice calls him '*Brahmabandhu*'. And twice does Gautama make a show of his Brahminhood: First, in naming the fault in Mālavikā's dance performance, namely, that it did not begin with the worship of a Brahmin, thereby setting every one laughing; and secondly, in declaring before Irāvatī that he

would unlearn his *Gāyatrī* if he had studied a single syllable of diplomacy.

Gautama plays his professional role of a fool very successfully. Dhāriṇī is unhappy over the quarrel of the two dance masters (act i). But Gautama says to her, " Queen, let us enjoy the fight of the rams. What is the use otherwise of paying them a salary ? " The queen calls him a quarrel-monger. Gautama promptly states that when two elephants were fighting there could be no peace until one of them was vanquished. And immediately turning to one of the dance masters he observes, " The queen is right. Ah, Gaṇadāsa ! you have been eating sweet balls offered to Saraswatī under the pretext of teaching dance. Why bother about this fight in which you will go down easily ? "

During the exhibition of the dance (act ii) he professes to have detected a flaw, which is omission of Brahmin worship. Parivrājikā declares ironically that he is a ' profound critic ' indeed ! Gautama admits that he belongs to the class of fools and is willing to be satisfied with the opinion of the wise. Immediately he pulls a bracelet from the hand of the king and proceeds to reward Mālavikā. Dhāriṇī naturally objects, " Why do you present the ornament when you know nothing of the merits of the performance ? " Gautama replies, " Because, it does not belong to me. "

Gautama makes another admission of his stupidity when he assures the anxious king that Bakulāvalikā would not forget her mission by saying that he, a dunce himself, could not manage to forget it. Further, he reproves Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā for having ' kicked ' the king's favourite Aśoka tree. The two girls are frightened ; and Irāvatī who is hidden behind a creeper heartily abuses Gautama for his meaningless reproach (act iii). When Agnimitra and Mālavikā meet in the Samudragṛha Gautama posts himself at the door ; but he dozes off, blabbers in his sleep and thereby provokes Irāvatī, whose maid then drops a stick over him. In his fright Gautama

exposes the lovers and, simultaneously, the concocted plot by which the lovers were enabled to meet each other. The situation is too hopelessly muddled to be saved, if it were not for the sheer coincidence of the accident reported to be caused by a 'brown monkey'.

It is true that Gautama cannot escape the responsibility, partially at least, for the fiasco in which the meeting of the lovers in the Samudragṛha ended. But there is another side to the picture. Gautama had planned this meeting very cleverly. He had arranged every single detail of the scheme so methodically that there was no possibility of any loophole in it. And it worked out, too, according to plan. Then having dismissed himself and the maid Bakulāvalikā under the pretext of driving away an imaginary deer from the Aśoka tree, with the obvious intention of leaving the lovers to enjoy their privacy, Gautama posted himself as a guard at the Samudragṛha. The successful conclusion of the scheme must have made Gautama a little careless; the confidence that nothing was likely to go wrong at this stage must have sent him into a well-earned sleep! Irāvatī's arrival at this moment was completely unexpected. Who could have imagined that Irāvatī would get the news of Gautama's serpent-bite so quickly, that she would suddenly decide to pay him a sympathetic visit, taking the opportunity simultaneously of apologising to the king for her haughty behaviour in an earlier meeting? This is the reason why Gautama was caught napping, both literally and metaphorically. And besides, how can we afford to miss the tremendous fun of the interesting situation? Gautama is not created to typify the infallible minister of politics. Consistent with Gautama's character it is necessary that the situation should have ended by the house-pigeon, released from the cage, falling into the mouth of a kite!

But it would not be wise to describe Gautama as a fool except in the professional sense. For, except for the above situation, every move that Gautama plans is deliberate and

properly conceived. His reference to his short-lived memory is humorous and is meant to assure the nervous king. In deliberately frightening Mālavikā near the Aśoka tree Gautama must have anticipated the possible developments: Bakulāvalikā was their accomplice; she would apologise to the king for kicking the tree, and also make Mālavikā do the same, bending down at the feet of the king. This would give Agnimitra an excellent opportunity not only for impressing upon Mālavikā his generous and kindly disposition but also for lifting her up, and thereby getting a physical thrill for which he was obviously pining. Gautama's calculation is so correct that Agnimitra is unable to keep up his gravity and gives himself away with a pleased laugh.

It is easy to see through Gautama's folly in the first two acts. Gautama's object in provoking the dance masters is to force their quarrel to a definite head. There is a strong reason to believe that he was responsible for originating the dispute. His references to the dance masters, therefore, as two rams, intoxicated elephants, and to their sinecure jobs, are intended to carry a deliberate sting on the surface of humour. And Gaṇadāsa, who appears to be more excitable of the two, is really hurt when Gautama charges him with wasting the queen's money by feeding himself only with *modakas*. Dhāriṇī frets and fumes. Gautama is ready to interpret the queen's anger as a spacious gesture to save her protégé from certain defeat. The sensitive Gaṇadāsa is driven to give an ultimatum to the queen that he is permitted either to demonstrate his real worth or quit the queen's favour. Dhāriṇī watches helplessly on. All her defence is knocked down. In fact, it was for this purpose that Gautama had chosen the subtle line of attack on the dance masters and used his wit with the sharpness of a weapon. It is true that Parivrājikā helps him not a little, particularly at those moments where the interference of Gautama would have looked suspicious. But Gautama must have taken her into his confidence and she must have agreed to play her part in the interests of Mālavikā. In the second act, the

interruption and the foolish question by Gautama serve the obvious purpose of detaining Mālavikā on the stage for the pleasure of the king. And when Mālavikā's face is lit up with a smile at the joke of Gautama, the king gets one more opportunity for appreciating her charm. Thus, Gautama is masquerading his folly for the triple purpose of secretly building up his plot, keeping himself, and naturally the king also, above the suspicion of involvement, and ministering to the pleasure and the happiness of his master. That Gautama succeeds thoroughly in fooling Dhāriṇī and the dance masters is proved by Gaṇadāsa's reply to the queen when she suggests that the objection raised by Gautama should be ignored. Gautama, replies Gaṇadāsa, can be credited with the power of minute observation on account of his association with the king. " Even a fool acquires wisdom in the company of the wise."

In his capacity as a friend of the king, helping him in his love affair, Gautama leaves nothing to be said. The king is so completely dependent on him that the entire initiative of action in the play rests in the hands of Gautama. The king's hope of getting Mālavikā is naturally founded on his confidence in Gautama's ability. At the close of the dance performance Gautama says to the king, " This is all that I can do for you". The king appeals to him not to draw such a line; for, the assistance of Gautama is needed even for introducing the king to Mālavikā. Needless to say that the king would be completely helpless in situations which are far more complicated as when the meeting near the Aśoka tree is unexpectedly interrupted by Irāvatī or when Mālavikā is locked up in a cellar.

Gautama is keenly aware of the difficulties that he must meet in fulfilling the wish of the king. The king is too helpless to take any initiative or risk. As for Mālavikā, she is blocked by Dhāriṇī 'as moonlight by clouds', and is jealously guarded 'like a treasure by a serpent'. But the resourcefulness and wit of Gautama do not fail him.

He plans everything with caution and thoroughness. He

warns the king, on the eve and during the performance of the opera, against betraying himself by his too happy look. "The honey is within reach," he says, "but the bee is also near." He advises the king against cancelling his appointment with Irāvatī in his eagerness to meet Mālavikā. He leads the king to Pramadavana and gives him a cautious hint at the approach of Irāvatī.

Even in the first two acts where he is playing the fool, it is Gautama who dominates. He sums up the issue of the quarrel between the two dance masters. He gives instructions for making preparations for the demonstration, and informing the king by the sound of the drum when the arrangements are completed. He interprets the subtle meaning of Mālavikā's song for the king. He correctly guesses the occasion for the visit of Mālavikā to the Pramadavana and assures the king that Dhāriṇī would not permit a maid (as Mālavikā was then supposed to be) to wear the family ornaments unless it were for fulfilling the *dohada* of the Aśoka. He proves to the sceptical king that Mālavikā is also in love by convincingly interpreting her words addressed to Bakulāvalikā.

Sometimes, it is true that Gautama is himself a little confused by an unexpected development; as, for example, by Irāvatī's arrival in the Pramadavana, or by the exposure in the Samudragṛha. In the latter situation he was nearly helpless. In the Pramadavana scene too, his first reaction is confused. Surprised by Irāvatī he asks the king to "take to heels". "If a thief," he says, "were caught in the act of boring a hole, he should say that he was only practising the theory that he had learnt". But a little later, Gautama gets his composure. He tells Irāvatī that the king was only amusing himself, awaiting her arrival. "If a casual talk with the queen's maid, seen by chance, is an offence," he says to Irāvatī, "then you are the only authority for this special ruling." Irāvatī is unable to find any words and only fumes in impotent rage.

But the superb wit of Gautama shines in his pre-planned manoeuvres. With the arrival of the dance masters whom Gautama has set fighting, the king says to him, " Friend, your clever strategy has blossomed into a flower. " Gautama remarks with calm confidence, " You will soon see the fruit also." This the king does in the form of the dance performance.

The meeting in the Pramadavana could also be attributed in the final analysis to Gautama. Dhāriṇī received some injury to her foot when she fell down from the swing " due to a prank on the part of Gautama". It is presumable that Gautama deliberately caused this minor accident. He knew that the queen loved her Aśoka blossoms exceedingly; that under the circumstances she could not herself fulfil the Aśoka *dohada*; that it was less likely that she would ask the younger queen to oblige her, particularly when her own beautiful maid was available; that, therefore, Mālavikā was most likely to be sent to the Aśoka tree. The meeting between the lovers was then quite possible.

About the second meeting in the Samudragṛha there is no doubt whatsoever, because the manoevure is put into operation before our eyes. Gautama puts the superb hoax of serpent-bite on Dhāriṇī, obtains the possession of her signet-ring by taking the royal physician and the queen's maid into his confidence, gets the king out by a pre-arranged message to attend state business and, thus, brings the two lovers together in the Samudragṛha. Gautama had anticipated the objection of the keeper of the cellar, Mādhavikā, and was ready with a suitable answer. The release of all prisoners, he tells her, was to be done on the advice of the king's astrologers who had discovered unpropitious stars in the king's horoscope. The signet-ring was not sent through the queen's maid and Gautama was asked to take it personally because the queen, who had put Mālavikā into prison in order to please Irāvatī, wished to create the impression that it was not she who was releasing Mālavikā but that the king was doing so. The explanation is completely

satisfactory. When the king, therefore, tries to attribute the success of the scheme entirely to the stupidity of the keeper of the cellar, Gautama reproaches him with, "I may be dull; but I do possess ready wit".

Thus does Gautama move in the play dominating the whole action. And while he does so, he enjoys himself thoroughly at the cost of every other character in the play. He provokes and pokes fun at the dance masters. He fools Dhāriṇī twice. Besides, he compares her successively to a fly, a row of clouds, a cat and once describes her as 'red-eyed'. The irascible Irāvatī he compares to Mars who has the habit of moving crookedly. Gautama does not spare even Parivrājikā and Mālavikā. The former is called Pīṭhamardikā which she is not; and Mālavikā languishing in the prison is compared to a Nāgakanyā.

A greater object of fun for Gautama is naturally the king in whose company he is constantly moving. Moreover, the king is so ridiculously dependent on him that Gautama has once to tell him bluntly, "I would appreciate it better if you had patience and hoped for the successful end of our work". He compares the king to a greedy bird who is afraid to fly into the slaughter-house to pick up his meat. Gautama had made it possible for the king to see Mālavikā at her best in the opera and had set the ball rolling. When the king turns to him again for further help Gautamn remarks, "That's fine! You are like a wretched patient. You want the doctor himself to bring the medicine to your door!" When the meeting in the Pramadavana ends disastrously, with the king lying prostrate at the feet of Irāvatī, and Irāvatī walking haughtily away, Gautama puts a seal on the ridiculous situation by remarking to the king, "Now get up. The propitiation is done!" When Mālavikā is appreciating the portrait of the king, Gautama teases the king by saying, "Did you hear? She prefers the picture to you. Your pride of your youth is like that of a casket of its jewels." And when finally Mālavikā is presented to the king not merely

as a wife but as a full-fledged queen, Gautama has his final joke at the blushing Agnimitra : " All bridegrooms are shy ! "

It is true that Gautama's wit has neither the cutting sharpness nor the amazing brilliance of that of Maitreya. Gautama is only funny. But he is unsurpassed as a clever and a resourceful schemer. There is no doubt that Agnimitra owes his Mālavikā entirely to the efforts of Gautama. Truly does Gautama deserve the title of a ' Minister of Love affairs ' !

While playing the professional fool Gautama fools every one. It is here that the uniqueness of his character lies.

V

MĀṆAVAKA

(in *Vikramorvaśīya*)

सर्वत्र प्रमादी वैधेयः ।

—The king, in act II.

भो अहल्याकामुकस्य इन्द्रस्य वज्रः सचिवः उर्वशी-
पर्युत्सुकस्य भवतः अपि अहम् । द्वौ अपि अत्र उन्मत्तौ ।

—Vidūṣaka, in act II.

The name of this Vidūṣaka, Māṇavaka, implies a diminutive human. The Ceṭī thinks that he looks 'like a monkey drawn in a picture'. Māṇavaka is conscious himself of his own looks: The king asks his son Āyus to salute the Brahmin 'without fear'. Māṇavaka asks, "Why should he fear? Having lived in the hermitage he should be familiar with a monkey." This ability to laugh at himself finds the highest expression in the disarming question that Māṇavaka puts to the king: "Is Urvaśī," he asks, "as incomparable in beauty as I am in ugliness?"

Though only a *Brahmabandhu* (to use the Ceṭī's expression), the fact that he happens to be a Brahmin by birth and a personal friend of the king, entitles him, he thinks, to a proper respect from every one. He demands that Urvaśī should salute him. He is prepared to bless a friend or a foe alike if he were only saluted, or a present were given to him. Māṇavaka regards himself as the representative of the Moon who happens to be the grandfather of Purūravas; and this being so, he assures the king that the ancestor's message is conveyed through him! The facts are that the king was offering his prayer to the moon and the Vidūṣaka got tired standing up; and so, he told the king that the moon, speaking through the Brahmin, had given the

permission to sit down! He expresses a pious hope about the king's success in love. Luckily the king experiences a good omen at the moment. Māṇavaka loses no time in boastfully declaring that a Brahmin's words are bound to come true.

Love of food is in Māṇavaka's blood. The queen suspects that the physical and the mental change that has come over the king is possibly due to a love affair. Māṇavaka assures her that the real cause is an upset bile; and asks her to rush appropriate food-stuffs. When the queen having slighted the prostration of the king departs in anger and the king, feeling a bit annoyed, decides to be stiff with her in future, Māṇavaka protests, "Hang your stiffness! Support first the life of a hungry Brāhmaṇa. It is high time for bath and meals."

The queen has undertaken a vow to please her lord. The king politely tells her that it was unnecessary. Māṇavaka misunderstands the object of the king's courtesy; and, afraid of losing the present of *modakas* in fulfilment of the vow, cuts the king's words by saying, "Stop that! It is not proper to oppose well-spoken words." Naturally, Māṇavaka is thrilled at the prospect of receiving the *svastivācana*. The queen coming with a dish of sweet balls is to him an object of beauty. Ceremonies do not interfere with his personal convenience, provided there is always a present to be given at the end. On such occasions he is generous with his blessings.

Though Māṇavaka does not mind a share in unguents and flowers, his natural preference is for sweet food. Food is always present in his mind and it invariably colours his observations and utterances. In possession of the king's secret of love, he compares his own condition to that of a Brahmin who is bursting with food crammed into his belly. He compares the king's joy in getting a letter from Urvaśī with his own delight on receiving a present of food. The moon appears to him as a broken piece of a sweet ball. Surely, as the king observes, 'Food is always the fond theme of a glutton.'

No wonder that Māṇavaka is able to divine satisfaction merely by the contemplation of food. To look at the various things laid out before cooking and to watch the preparation of an infinite variety of dishes, is a pleasure the like of which cannot be found either on earth or in heaven. "What is there in heaven?" he asks Urvaśī with undisguised contempt: "One neither eats nor drinks in heaven but sits only mocking at the fish with unwinking eyes!" The best and the happiest place for Māṇavaka is, of course, the kitchen. When the lovelorn king asks him to suggest some diversion for his sorrow Māṇavaka promptly says, "Let us go to the kitchen."

Māṇavaka is afraid of serpents. Urvaśī's birchleaf letter is mistaken by him for the slough of a serpent and he runs away from it in fear. He is equally afraid of the queen's maid, though this fear is based on his incapacity to match his own wits with the maid's. He sees the maid from a distance only and the king's secret seems to rush out breaking the citadel of his heart. His attempt to control his own tongue proves to be useless. The maid is quite conscious that she will take no time in fooling him. The secret will easily slip from him as dew-drops slide on a blade of grass. With a simple trick the maid says to him that the king addressed the queen absent-mindedly with the name of his new beloved. And Māṇavaka shakes the entire secret information out of his system, glad that he need imprison his tongue no longer.

Māṇavaka stumbles from folly to folly. His greatest blunder is, of course, to lose the love letter written by Urvaśī. His explanation, that it was a divine parchment and it disappeared on the divine path followed by Urvaśī, is a ridiculous bluff. But afterwards when the queen confronts the king with the letter and the king endeavours to save the situation by disowning the letter, Māṇavaka butts in with unwanted remarks and makes the confusion worse confounded. As a matter of fact he cannot think of any way out of the situation. "What can a thief say when he is caught red-handed?" he asks the king. But he

tells the queen nevertheless that it was not the letter but a disorder of the bile that was the cause of the king's distraction. He advises her to offer food as a sure means of propitiating even a goblin. But this advice has a dangerous implication. It would imply that the king could not be expected to admit his connection with the letter without due propitiation. And the king has been striving to disprove the very connection! The king remarks disgustedly, "Fool, you are forcing the guilt on me."

In turning to Māṇavaka for help and assistance, the king is courting only trouble and despair. Māṇavaka shows a little interest in the king's love affair; but that extends only as far as describing the king as a Cātaka craving for heavenly drops of water. The king wishes to explain his own love-sick condition, probably with a view to unburdening his heart; but Māṇavaka's comment is that it is too apparent to need any description. Māṇavaka has no ability to offer any kind of assistance. All that he can suggest is that the king may either dream about Urvaśī or paint her picture, as a means of mitigating his love-sickness. When the king, however, points out that none of these means are available to him on account of sentimental reasons, Māṇavaka remarks, "This is the limit of my intellectual faculty. I can do nothing further for you."

Māṇavaka has no imagination also. His observations that the birch-leaf may be Urvaśī's letter, and that the vow that the queen has undertaken may be the result of her repentance for having slighted the king, are conjectures on which he has luckily stumbled. Reasoning is not in his line. He either misinterprets things or he bluffs. His construction on the abrupt exit of the angry queen as being favourable to the progress of the king's secret love affair is naturally not correct. When he discovers that he was trapped into revealing the king's secret, and further that it was a blunder to lose the love letter which was entrusted to him, Māṇavaka tries to cover his folly by useless bluffing.

As a friend, Māṇavaka is expected to assist the king in his love affair. The king would not otherwise turn to him for assistance or consultation. But Māṇavaka is more a nuisance than a help. Strangely enough, Māṇavaka is prepared to work in the opposite camp too. He openly sympathises with the queen and sends his personal assurance through her maid that he would not show his face to her until he had saved the king from the mirage of love. Māṇavaka's own dictum that even a goblin can be bribed with food is certainly very true in his own case.

Māṇavaka moves in the play poking fun at everybody. The king in love with Urvaśī is to him a Cātaka craving for heavenly rain-drops. When the king is confronted with the love letter by the queen, Māṇavaka uses the imagery of a thief caught red-handed. When Urvaśī sits by the side of the king on the moon-lit terrace, he bluntly asks them both: 'Is it night for you already?' The queen decides in a spirit of resignation to permit the king to marry the woman he loves and leaves him. The king is about to address a few appropriate words of courtesy to her. Māṇavaka encourages the king by saying, "Speak up, no fear! You have been given up by the queen as a physician abandons a patient who is past cure." Māṇavaka does not spare the poor queen too on this occasion. Her conciliatory attitude he identifies with that of a fisherman who, finding that the fish has slipped through his fingers, says: 'I am observing piety.' Naturally he can have a dig at Urvaśī also: The king asks Māṇavaka what possibly could have led Urvaśī to hide from him the fact that a son was born to them. Māṇavaka confesses that it is beyond his power to explain her behaviour, but adds as an afterthought that Urvaśī could not admit her motherhood because it would have meant that she was getting old: she must be afraid of losing her hold on the king! Māṇavaka's fun knows no propriety. Urvaśī explains to the king that she was permitted to stay with him on a stipulated condition; the association was to terminate at the

sight of a son. The explanation creates a wave of sorrow which overtakes all who are present. Purūravas and Urvaśī are naturally affected most. Māṇavaka remarks at this moment, "Now, I guess, you will put on barks and repair to a penance grove."

It was certainly foolish to expect either assistance or helpful advice from Māṇavaka. Neither go beyond pious platitudes like, 'Don't lament. The God of love will soon look upon you with favour'; 'Urvaśī has shown the flower of your desire (the love letter); now she will not fail about the fruit (the actual meeting)'; 'You will get her in a short time'.

Māṇavaka is only a 'blundering fool' as the king rightly says. To imagine him as an ally of the king in love affairs is ridiculous. Māṇavaka himself exclaims laughingly, "Ah! The thunderbolt to be the minister of Indra infatuated with Ahalyā and I to be your counsellor in your mad passion for Urvaśī! Methinks both are mad." Māṇavaka's self-comment is perfectly justified.

VI

MĀḌHAVYA
(in *Abhijñānaśākuntala*)

चपलोऽयं बटुः ।

—Duṣyanta, in Act II.

मया अपि मृत्पिण्डबुद्धिना तथैव गृहीतम् ।

—Vidūṣaka, in Act VI.

Māḍhavya is seen in the pleasure garden attached to Duṣyanta's palace, rushing forward with a raised stick in order to destroy one of Cupid's arrows, the mango blossom. Duṣyanta stops him with the remark that he is quite convinced of the latter's Brahmanical prowess. This observation fixes the caste and the type of this Vidūṣaka: Māḍhavya is a stupid, cowardly Brahmin.

Duṣyanta's hunting expedition on which Māḍhavya had to accompany him has given him the creeps of his life. It has totally destroyed the settled and comfortable life of this poor Brahmin to such an extent that he rues the very friendship with the king which has obliged him to keep him company. Rushing after the wild game from one forest into another, when the sun is climbing towards the zenith, is not a very comfortable way of living life. The hot season, the bare trees and the thin shade of the groves make it worse. There is no means to slake the overpowering thirst and soothe the parched throat; because the only water that is available in the forest is that of mountain streams; and it is tepid and the falling withered leaves have given it a bitter taste. There is no good food to be seen anywhere except the meat of the killed game which is simply roasted on iron spikes and is eaten without any condiments or side dishes; and, that too, at extremely irregular hours. Riding

on horse-back in hot pursuit of the animals of the forest has loosened and dislocated every joint in Māḍhavya's body. The sorely aching limbs have destroyed his sleep at night. And if he tried to snatch a few moments of rest in the grateful hours of the morning, the hunters, who crept into the forest along with their hounds in the small hours in order to catch the quarry in a surprise seige, kicked up such a terrible din as would awaken even the dead from their graves. How could one exist under such conditions? Māḍhavya's bitter complaint appears to be:

What is this life if full of creep
An' no time for drink, food and sleep?

Māḍhavya would have very much liked if Duṣyanta had left him alone, or at least stopped this fooling about the forest for a day. It is on this background that the Śakuntalā affair appears to him as the addition of a nasty pimple to a blistering boil. For, assuming that Duṣyanta has fallen in love with a forest girl there is no hope of the camp life coming to an end.

Māḍhavya, therefore, collects his wits together in order to present a stiff opposition to Duṣyanta. He declares that his body is stiff and paralysed; he can greet Duṣyanta only by using his tongue uttering the formula of welcome but omitting the accompanying gesture of the body. He holds Duṣyanta directly responsible for the sorry state to which he has been reduced. If a cane on a river bank were to bend like a hunchback, it would not do so out of pleasure or love; this sport is imposed on it by the force of the river water; likewise, it is by Duṣyanta's hunt that Māḍhavya is crippled. Māḍhavya grumbles, argues aggressively, appeals to Duṣyanta and begs for a brief respite. It was necessary for him to use every means of persuasion while he was talking to Duṣyanta. But he need not follow any decorum with reference to the king's General; and so, he openly and heartily curses him for his apparent enthusiasm for hunting. Mighty glad must Māḍhavya have been when Duṣyanta decided to drop the hunting, whatever may be his reasons for doing so.

And when a little later, Māḍhavya gets an opportunity for returning to the Capital with the army, leaving Duṣyanta alone to his fascination of the forest, his pride and joy know no bounds.

It does not mean that Māḍhavya has no sympathy for Duṣyanta. His opposition to the love affair of Duṣyanta springs partially, as indicated, from the fact that it was an encroachment on his personal comfort. In addition, it must have been due to his ignorance about Śakuntalā and also the desire that his royal friend should not be involved in anything that would invite moral reproach. He does not wish that Duṣyanta, a Kṣatriya, should entertain a passion for a Tāpasakanyā who perhaps was a Brahmin. Besides, Duṣyanta's passion may prove to be a passing fancy like that of a man who turns from sweet dates to tamarind only to return back with increased craving for sweet enjoyment. When Duṣyanta satisfies him on these counts, Māḍhavya withdraws his objection. "You have transformed the penance grove", he says, "into a pleasure garden". He encourages Duṣyanta to talk about Śakuntalā and asks him to be patient in a characteristic blunt way: "You don't expect the girl to sit on your knee the moment she sees you, do you?" But he is confident about Duṣyanta. Giving his blessings for a successful journey of love he tells Duṣyanta to 'collect the necessary provisions'.

It was natural that Māḍhavya should have lent a sympathetic ear to Duṣyanta once his personal comfort was assured. But it must be remembered that he is also a close friend of the king for whose personal charm and majesty he has a genuine appreciation. The queen mother looks on him as Duṣyanta's younger brother. Duṣyanta sends him back to the Capital with the honours of an heir-apparent. Humouring apart, Māḍhavya has every reason to display a friendly concern for Duṣyanta. When Duṣyanta is submerged in sorrow at the loss of Śakuntalā, Māḍhavya stands by his side, urges him to talk about Śakuntalā, asks him to complete the unfinished picture and, in one way or

the other, endeavours to provide comforting diversion from the depression of great misery. He appeals to Duṣyanta not to lose courage : " Mountains do not tremble in a stormy wind ", he says. He asks Duṣyanta to be patient and not give up hope. The miraculous recovery of the ring, he observes, is a promise of an equally miraculous reunion in future. He adds with shrewd wisdom that no parents would like their married daughter to be separated from her husband for a long time ; and so, Śakuntalā's parents would not sit with folded hands helplessly watching the spectacle of sorrow.

But essentially Māḍhavya is stupid. While wishing to be sympathetic to Duṣyanta in his sorrow he still thinks that Duṣyanta's sentimental grief is a madman's grief. Duṣyanta's addresses to the bee in the picture are to him the ravings of a madman and he blames himself for being taken in by them. While Duṣyanta is consumed with grief Māḍhavya remembers his own gnawing hunger. While Duṣyanta describes the beautiful background he wishes to paint for his picture, Māḍhavya confesses, albeit to himself, that the canvas should be filled with hosts of long-bearded ascetics. And though Māḍhavya has kept this stupid observation to himself in the Pramadavana scene, he has not concealed it in the earlier camp scene. Duṣyanta turns to him for advice. Māḍhavya inevitably thinks that the advice is sought in the matter of eating sweet things on which he probably thinks himself to be an authority. What Duṣyanta really wanted to find out was some plausible excuse for repeating his visit to the hermitage. Māḍhavya asks him to go there as a tax collector ! Further, Duṣyanta finds himself caught in a painful dilemma and is unable to decide whether he should remain in the hermitage as the ascetics want him to do, or return to his palace as his mother wishes him to do. Māḍhavya suggests the golden mean of hanging in between the two courses, as Triśaṅku did of old, being suspended in mid-air !

Duṣyanta must be fully aware of the stupidity of Māḍhavya which sometimes might have been only funny although unhelp-

ful, but which at times was apt to be inconveniently embarrassing. Wisely, therefore, does Duṣyanta decide to keep Māḍhavya out of his love affair. A little flattery is enough to convince the Vidūṣaka into believing anything. We have it on the confession of the 'clodpated fool' himself.

This fool is a coward also. The mention of the invisible demons in the forest takes the wind completely out of him: He did have some curiosity to see Śakuntalā, overflowing curiosity, as he says; but the news of the demons dried it up so completely that not a drop was left. However, when it is decided that he should return to the Capital he says to Duṣyanta, "Surely, you don't think that I am afraid of demons?" Duṣyanta replies with a smile, "Great Brahmin, how can I imagine this in your case!"

Māḍhavya is equally afraid of the harem which he describes as a 'snare' where unwary souls are caught to their woe. Hence, he is unwilling to go to Haṁsapadikā's apartment to deliver Duṣyanta's message. He knows that once Haṁsapadikā's maids caught him he would be like an ascetic in the hands of celestial nymphs, hopeless of any chance of emancipation. But he is not able to escape this contingency, as he does not escape the pounding at the hands of Indra's charioteer Mātali.

But if Duṣyanta decided to drop a curtain over his love affair before the babbling fool, Kālidāsa too chose to keep this butt of ridicule behind the scene. One would have loved, for the sheer fun of it, to see Māḍhavya surrounded by the maids of Haṁsapadikā, pulling him by the lock of his hair and raining blows on him. One would have liked to see how Mātali held him, pushing his neck down and legs in the air and crushing him like a piece of sugarcane into small bits. But the foolish Brahmin is mercifully spared by the poet and we miss this violent fun on the stage.

VII

MAITREYA

(in *Mṛcchakaṭika*)

अये सर्वकालमित्रं मैत्रेयः प्राप्तः।
......अथवा नाहं दरिद्रः यस्य मम
विभवानुगता भार्या, सुखदुःखसुहृद् भवान्।

—Cārudatta, in Act I and III. 28.

Maitreya is happily a brilliant exception to the common run of the Vidūṣakas. Of course, being a Vidūṣaka he has certain fixed traits of his class. His appearance is somewhat ugly. Śakāra twice calls him 'crow-foot-headed'; and Maitreya himself compares the shape of his head to the knee of a young camel. He is a Brahmin. His Brahminhood, however, has neither the depth of apparent learning nor the height of boastful pretensions. He is certainly aware of the recitation of Vedic mantras, sacrificial performance and ritual slaughter; and his talk is naturally coloured by these references. When he sees the dozing doorkeeper of Vasantasenā, the comparison that comes to his mind is that of a self-complacent Vedic Brahmin. He confesses that he cannot resist laughing when he sees a woman learning Sanskrit and a man singing in narrow pitch: the former reminds him of a cow snorting with a new nose-string; and the latter of an old priest wearing faded flowers and muttering the mantras. While moving through the apartments of Vasantasenā's house he is envious of his good luck. For, Rāvaṇa got his *Puṣpaka Vimāna* after severe penance: but without the slightest discomfort Maitreya could roam through the heavenly apartments escorted by males and females. Maitreya's comments imply a dislike of the mechanical daily routine of the Brahmanical order and a love of lazy life supported by other peoples' food.

Maitreya's love of food is already hinted at in the invitation that the Sūtradhāra gives. But Maitreya waxes really eloquent when he comes to the kitchen in Vasantasenā's palatial mansion. The bustling activities in the kitchen—the butcher's boy washing the tendrils of the slaughtered animals, the preparation of *modakas* on the one hand and the frying of the *apūpas* on the other—and that delicious and exciting smell of seasoned preparations...present such an inviting panorama that it would be a surprise if, watching it, Maitreya did not feel that he was in paradise! When he sees the enormously fat mother of Vasantasenā, he at once knows that her fatness and illness are due to overeating; and he envies her! An irresistible desire for seeking an invitation shapes in his mind. He imagines that somebody will cordially ask him to wash his hands and feet and place before him dishes of food! It appears that the frustration of his desire has left a strong mark on Maitreya's mind. But his gluttony has a pathetic side. During the days of Cārudatta's prosperity Maitreya had before him a heap of specially prepared, delicious desserts. He only touched the many dishes as a painter touches his bowls of paints; he rested completely satisfied like a bull in the market ruminating his food in a public square. But now Maitreya has to go out and search for food. That is why, it is not merely greed that colours his recollection; along with the comic, it has a pathetic side too.

As a Vidūṣaka, Maitreya is cowardly. He may growl at the tresspassers and threaten them for having molested Radanikā in the dark; or he may raise his stick at the pigeons; but he has no courage to go out in the dark alone. He must have a lamp and the company of Radanikā too. When Cārudatta asks him to escort Vasantasenā, he replies, "It will be better if you go. You will look like a swan following the goose!" This timidity of Maitreya is not merely a physical trait. He is really afraid that in the evening time when the streets are crowded with royal favourites and courtesans he will be like a rabbit surrounded by serpents; people will rush at him to have

fun, as wild dogs pounce on the offerings of food.

Maitreya's apparent stupidity is matched by his timid nature. He is unable to solve a simple riddle which Vasantasenā's Ceṭa puts to him. He does not know when the mangoes blossom and what protects a city; and even when he gets the answers from Cārudatta he fails to connect the words properly to get the name 'Vasanta-senā'. It appears that he cannot divine the subtlety in a situation or a speech. Vasantasenā clings to Cārudatta frightened by the thunder; Cārudatta experiences a thrill; but Maitreya starts to hit at the cloud for frightening Vasantasenā! But there are two very obvious instances of his stupidity in the play. In a way it is Maitreya who is responsible for the theft of the ornaments. His unwillingness to forego his sweet sleep and his nervous rattling in the sleep supply the necessary facility for Śarvilaka. Further, Maitreya drops the ornaments in the court in an unguarded moment. The blunder is so fatal, it almost costs the life of Cārudatta.

It is obvious that Maitreya's blunders help the development of the dramatic story. It is quite likely that Śūdraka may have utilized, like Kālidāsa, the follies of the Vidūṣaka as deliberate devices for plot-development. Śūdraka has tenderly delineated these traits in his Vidūṣaka. But had Śūdraka stopped with this treatment his portrayal of Maitreya would have been but conventional. Śūdraka's success and the real worth of Maitreya's portrait consist in going beyond the conventional frame.

Maitreya's tongue knows no restraint. He does not speak but hits. In these lashes of his tongue there appear to be two prejudices: wealth and harlot. His hatred for wealth may have been born out of Cārudatta's poverty; but his attitude is different from that of Cārudatta. Unlike Cārudatta he does neither sigh over the recollection of past grandeur, nor is he perturbed over the calculating, selfish and heartless treatment of the world at a change of fortune. While offering consolation to Cārudatta, Maitreya appears to probe deeper into the real

nature of wealth. He describes wealth as ' the morning breakfast '—unsubstantial and insufficient to stay hunger. It goes exactly where it is not wanted! Since Maitreya looks at the dealings of wealth from this philosophical angle, there is no sentimentalism in his attitude. It is true that the inhospitable treatment in Vasantasenā's house enraged him. But there is nothing surprising in his anger. For the poor are not frugal at least of rich words; it is the rich who are really miserly. It is probably with this understanding that Maitreya describes Vasantasenā's mother, who is swollen with fat and wealth, as ' a penny-goblin '.

Maitreya's hatred of harlots finds expression in his criticism of woman, money and prostitution. Vasantasenā's wealth dazzles his eyes but does not impress his mind. Seeing Vasantasenā's brother clad in fine silk and bejewelled with ornaments, he confesses that that position is not possible without the merit and austerity of a previous life. But he does not forget to add that the company of such people has to be shunned like flowers growing on the cemetery-grounds. He is merciless in his jest of Vasantasenā's mother. He refuses to believe that her enormously fat body could pass through any doors and wonders if the walls and the doors were built after having placed her in the room first! He has no sympathy for her supposed illness and he remarks that her dead body would feed at least a thousand jackals! He tries to guess the source of this enormous wealth in Vasantasenā's house. He first thinks that it must be a prosperous trade on the sea; but he immediately corrects himself and remarks, ' How stupid of me! Your breasts, hips and buttocks are your charming ships floating on the waters of passion in the ocean of love '! Maitreya certainly flings away the limits of decorum and decency in pouring a stinging ridicule on the life of prostitution. But blunt speech is characteristic of Maitreya. He has come to the conclusion that a courtesan can only be painfully thrown out like a pebble caught in the shoe. Having experienced the inhospitable treatment in Vasantasenā's

house and having seen her avarice in accepting the preciou necklace for the stolen ornaments, Maitreya's only concern is t persuade Cārudatta to give up Vasantasenā for good; and thi he does by entreaty, importunity and blunt criticism. Whe Cārudatta asks him to help Vasantasenā in stepping down fron the car, he says in an uncourteous way, " Has she her feet i chains that she cannot alight herself ? " Even though he is awar that Vasantasenā has come, out of love, to the house o Cārudatta, through thunder and rain, he asks her maid an uncivi question, " Are you planning to sleep here tonight ? " Maitreya' speech is undoubtedly blunt and ungentlemanly. But there is n personal malice. He firmly believes that ' a lotus-creeper grow ing without root, a merchant who does not cheat, a goldsmit who does not appropriate the customer's gold, a concourse o villagers where there are no quarrels and a courtesan who has n greed for money ', these are impossible in the world. Maitreya' opinions about women and wealth do not change and hence they amount to a prejudice. But it seems that Maitreya is in clined to look at everything through a critical eye.

Maitreya turns his sharp satire to every inconsistency an shortcoming. Nothing seems to escape his observant an thoughtful eye. He does not exclude Cārudatta and eve himself from criticism. It is no wonder then that the entir creation figures in his witty similes. From the clod of eart to the heaven, from flowers to stars, from the inanimate creatio to the animals and human beings, and from zoology t mythology, all things swim into his unchecked vision and suppl the themes for his sharp and satirical humour. Maitreya move in the whole play putting on the clown's cap but talking wisel and brandishing his tongue in multi-coloured jest, wit, satir parody and subtle practical wisdom. Maitreya is not that fo who only makes a laughing-stock of himself. His unshape head contains a really wise brain. It is the wisdom which not taught, which is not acquired by the study of books, b which has to be slowly accumulated by keeping the eyes, ea

and mind open in the struggling existence of the world. Of course, Maitreya is foolish: Whatever he does turns topsy-turvy 'like the reflected image in a mirror'. He does not know the time and place for jest. But his observations are no doubt rooted in deep reflection, cool intellect and practical wisdom. Such wisdom which is dressed in the clown's clothes may appear to be inconsistent; but it is indeed what puts life into the dead bones of a conventional Vidūṣaka. As Maitreya moves in the play shooting his folly at all observable things, he certainly reminds us of Shakespeare's Touchstone, like whom,

'. . . in his brain . . .
. . . he hath strange places cramm'd
With observation.'

In the midst of apparent inconsistencies, there is one consistency that shines out in Maitreya's character and lifts him to a noble level. It is his affection for Cārudatta. It bears no comparison. Cārudatta's poverty has added only human sympathy to Maitreya's filial devotion. He has to wander away to find food but 'like a domestic pigeon' he returns to his friend's house without fail. He will never forsake Cārudatta whatever might happen. He is ever straining himself to console Cārudatta whose mind is weighed with dejection and sorrow. Inspite of his prejudice against the courtesans, he is prepared to go to Vasantasenā's house whenever Cārudatta asks him to do so. Maitreya is often moved by the unjust spectacle of a righteous and generous man like Cārudatta being visited by penury. At the thought of this undeserved calamity his blood boils and he does not hesitate to question the utility of human devotion to the gods in heaven. The charge of murder against the innocent Cārudatta moves him to the depths of his heart. He rushes to the court and, bursting with uncontrollable rage, sadness and frustration, he addresses the jury:

"Ye noble Sires! How can you believe that he who has spent his precious fortune in raising colonies, convents, parks, temples, tanks, wells and sacrificial pillars and has

bestowed lavish beauty on this city of Ujjayinī, would commit such a base act of murder when he is thrown on poverty? Tell me, oh! will this my friend do a deed that will deny him both heaven and earth, when he is not prepared even to bend the Mādhavī creeper and pluck her flowers in fear that he might tear her tender leaves?"

This spontaneous appeal of Maitreya is packed with concern for justice, logical argument, entreaty, moving emotion and righteous indignation dissolved in pathos. It is difficult to find such ringing eloquence springing from a pious emotion of the human heart. Who could have expected this stupid Vidūṣaka to hold a brief for justice and humanity with such boldness and wisdom!

But Maitreya's appeal falls flat before the circumstantial evidence gathered in the court. Hit to the depth of his being, mad with rage at the blind injustice, Maitreya releases his wrath on the diabolical Śakāra. For a moment he forgets the formal behaviour expected in a solemn court of justice; he forgets even his weakness and timidity. He attacks Śakāra in the court with his merciless tongue and his stick which is 'as crooked as the villain's heart'.

When Cārudatta is sentenced to death, the world comes to an end for Maitreya. It is impossible for him to leave Cārudatta alone at the threshold of death, when he has kept him company along the whole passage of the living world. 'The tree must fall when the roots are dug out'. He will, therefore, permit himself to live for a while only till he brings Rohasena to Cārudatta in fulfilment of his last desire. Holding the little hand of the child firmly in his grip, this poor Brahmin jostles through the crowds collected at the scene of the gallows, pushed to and fro, crying in bewilderment and pathos and shouting the name of Cārudatta. He has never gone against Cārudatta's word. But for once, on the border of life and death, he has decided to disobey him. He would entrust Rohasena to his

mother and free himself from the responsibility. But when he returns from seeing Cārudatta, he finds to his bewilderment that Āryā Dhūtā is preparing to burn herself to death. Neither persuasion nor Śāstric injunction is of avail with her. Maitreya then utters his last words that burn with Brahmanic lustre in defiance of death :

> " The Brahmin must have precedence in religious works undertaken for achieving a desired object. I will enter the fire first. You can follow me ".

It is remarkable that while in the court Cārudatta's first thought turns to Maitreya. There cannot be a more apt description of Maitreya than that contained in Cārudatta's phrase : 'Sarva-kāla-mitra'. A friend in need, Maitreya is a friend indeed !

The ability of Maitreya to forget the frailty of human flesh in a court of law makes us feel annoyed with the stiff judge who orders him unceremoniously out. But Maitreya's colossal courage in face of leaping death restores our faith in life, despite its perverted justice, mean wickedness and wanton cruelty.

VIII

VASANTAKA

(in *Priyadarśikā*)

मूर्ख, नैष: काल: परिहासस्य ।

—The King, in Act III.

Vasantaka is a Brahmin quite innocent of any learning but ready to jump at the prospect of a sweet present. He is unable to conceal his joy when he receives an invitation from Vâsavadattā to accept the *Svastivācana*. In this moment of delight he boasts before his friend, the king, that though the palace is full of Brahmins who have studied four, five and six Vedas, the queen's choice has fallen on him. The king remarks, "Your claim to being a Brahmin is proved by the mere number of Vedas you have mentioned". Vasantaka knows in his own heart what he is worth; but he knows the tricks of his trade too. He promptly decides to take a hurried bath at the pond attached to the shower-house and present himself before the queen, in time, cackling like a cock. How otherwise could Brahmins like him receive any presents in the royal household?

Vasantaka loves good food as well as personal comfort. Though not devoid of a sense of beauty he shows no enthusiasm for witnessing the performance given by Āraṇyikā: He has passed anxious days and sleepless nights with the king who had fallen in love with Āraṇyikā and who was pining for a union with her. The performance gives the king an opportunity to meet her. Vasantaka does not grudge the king his pleasure, although he knows how kings in love make themselves ridiculous and how they can be twisted round their small fingers even by palace maids. But he must now have his own pleasure; he must make up for his lost sleep. He therefore dozes off on the

eve of the performance. The maid Manoramā rouses him when the performance is about to begin. Vasantaka is so angry that he abuses the maid heartily and goes away to have his sleep in peace.

Vasantaka exhibits, at times, downright stupidity. The king waxes sentimentally over the virtues of captivity because it had brought him, along with other things, a jewel of a woman in the form of Vāsavadattā. Vasantaka asks him whether he has forgotten how he had faced restless nights when he was himself captured like an elephant, when iron fetters clanked round his feet, his mouth became dry, his mind was in torture and his eyes gaped with impotent rage. The king explains to him that the love of Vāsavadattā had turned the prison into a pleasure. As if he had detected a logical flaw in the statement, the Vidūṣaka asks proudly: If the fetters were fetters of joy, why should the king worry about the capture of Dṛḍhavarman (the father of the heroine)? What is true in one case ought to be true in the other also! The king naturally has to ask the fool to shut up.

Vasantaka is responsible for giving out the secret scheme according to which the king was to take the place of Manoramā in the dance performance and meet his beloved on the stage. When he goes away to sleep, Vasantaka babbles out the whole secret before Vāsavadattā's maid. Manoramā is shocked to find that Vasantaka has made a perfect mess of the whole thing. But then why should she suffer for the Vidūṣaka's stupid behaviour? She lies to Vāsavadattā who takes Vasantaka to be the real 'string-puller of the love intrigue' and promptly orders him to be put in chains. Vasantaka must have realised now at least that all fetters are not fetters of joy! To add to his mortification Manoramā reproaches him for his miscarried diplomacy. And Vasantaka's vain attempt to explain the situation to Vāsavadattā elicits only derisive laughter.

It is true that Vasantaka's love of sleep was responsible for the bungling of the affair of dance performance. But sometimes

his stupidity appears to be deliberate: The heroine is put in prison by the jealous queen. The king consults Vasantaka with a view to finding out a remedy for her release. Vasantaka suggests an invasion of the harem with the whole army! The king dismisses this nonsensical suggestion and points out that nothing can be done by displeasing the queen. Vasantaka then advises, " Friend, observe fast for one month. The angry queen will be pleased ".

Vasantaka has every reason to be afraid of queen Vāsavadattā. He has been directed by the love-sick king to search for Āraṇyikā and, failing that, to bring from the pond the lotus leaves hallowed by the touch of her hand. The poor fool does not know how to pick up the particular leaves. Manoramā tells him, " I will *inform* you ". Vasantaka misunderstands her words and, trembling with fear, says, " To whom will you inform me ? " To the queen ? But I didn't say anything ! "

Vasantaka is glad at first about the secret scheme of the dance performance and is ready to play his part. But he must have rued the day he allowed himself to be drawn into the intrigue, considering the fiasco that resulted from it. No wonder he refuses to accompany the king at the time of approaching the queen with a plea for releasing the fettered Āraṇyikā. The king may laugh at Vasantaka's nervousness; but the latter's fear is real.

It is possible that Vasantaka's nervousness and his love of physical comfort go together. Anything that interferes with his personal comfort—may it be the disturbance to his sleep, the idea of fetter, or of seige, or the fear of punishment—seems to take the wind out of him. On such occasions his utterances and his reaction become very stupid and funny.

Sometimes Vasantaka is in a different element. He shows a surprising sense of aesthetic appreciation when he is moving in the garden with the king. He notices the Saptaparṇa tree porfusely shedding its flowers, releasing at the same time, at

the close of the rainy season, drops of water through the folds of its leaves. This fancy encourages the king to notice further resemblances of the garden to a rainy day. It is Vasantaka, again, whose eye moves from the beauty of nature to the beauty of human form. Like a skilled observer he compares the roving figure of Āraṇyikā to an incarnation of the garden deity; her braid of black hair fragrant with the perfume of flowers is like a row of bees; and her arms are a radiant, lean, delicate creeper. He is impressed by the fact that, as Āraṇyikā's hand moves in the water to pick up the lotuses, the lustre of her coral palm throws into background the beauty of lotus-beds.

The soaring fancy does not deprive Vasantaka, however, of a cool practical sense. As a friend and companion of the king he certainly tries to assist the king as far as his wits permit him to do so. He sympathises with the king in his torment of love and undertakes to search for Āraṇyikā. He is the first to catch the sight of Āraṇyikā and the maid Indīvarikā. When further Āraṇyikā is harassed by bees and covers her face with her veil, it is Vasantaka who prompts the king to move forward, predicting that Āraṇyikā will mistake him for the accompanying maid and, in her agitation, will fall into his arms. This, the king admits, is a timely advice. Āraṇyikā naturally falls in the arms of the king and discovering her mistake moves away, nervously calling Indīvarikā for help. Vasantaka remarks pleasantly, " Lady, should you shout for Indīvarikā, a maid, when the capable protector of the whole earth, the Vatsa king, is offering you help ? "

Vasantaka behaves warily on this occasion and asks the king to get in the plantain grove, lest the approaching maid reported the incident to the queen. But Āraṇyikā is a little nervous. The day is getting hot. The maid persuades her to go back to the palace. The disappointed king turns to the Vidūṣaka for help in having another meeting with Āraṇyikā. Vasantaka, however, gets into a nasty mood. He blames the king, to the latter's great surprise, for spoiling the present chance by not

heeding to his advice. Did he not tell the king to approach Āraṇyikā *silently*? But the king wanted to show off his begotten wisdom before the girl, and actually *talked* to her in reproachful words expressing lyrical sentiment! "You broke your own doll. How do you cry now?" What can the king say to this fool?

But later on, when Āraṇyikā-Priyadarśikā is poisoned and the king stands before her shedding helpless tears, Vasantaka keeps his head cool and advises the king to use his serpent-charm to counteract the poison, and himself runs to get the water needed for reciting the incantations. In the final moment of triumph he acts superbly in the interests of the king: The news of victory over the Kaliṅga king, who had imprisoned the heroine's father, is an occasion for joy. Vasantaka assumes the role of a preceptor and dictates:

> "On such an occasion of prosperity, the following things ought to be done in the royal household: (Pointing out to the king, and gesticulating playing on the lute), Worship of the Sire. (Showing his sacred thread), Worthy reception to a Brahmin. (Suggesting Āraṇyikā), Release of all prisoners."

Vasantaka clinches the issue by reminding Vāsavadattā that the Physician (namely, the king), who saved the life of her sister (Āraṇyikā), deserves to be appropriately rewarded.

IX

VASANTAKA

(in *Ratnāvalī*)

अयि ऋजुके वसन्तकः खलु एषः । न जानासि त्वं एतस्य वक्रभणितानि ।

—Vāsavadattā, in Act II.

This Vasantaka is a foolish Brahmin, and a companion of the king. The comical side of his character, however, is more emphasised than in the case of his *alter ego*. Already, there is a hint at his ugly appearance: Sāgarikā mistakes his voice for that of a wicked monkey. And when he makes his appearance, she cannot help remarking that he is indeed a sight for the eyes.

Vasantaka is a Mahābrāhmaṇa, as the king observes. And Vasantaka justifies the appellation when he mistakes a *Gāthā* for a *Ṛc*. He does not seem to have taken any trouble, any time, to learn things that require application, and he has no desire to do so now. The sight of the dancing maids inspires him to join the hilarous festival. He is prepared, for a moment, to learn what he thinks to be a *carcarī* from the maids. But when he is told that it was a *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* that they were singing, and that it required to be learnt by heart, he immediately gives up the idea. For, he has nothing to do with any kind of learning which involves physical or mental effort.

Vasantaka has a Brahmin's love of food. When he learns that what he called *carcarī* was a *dvipadī-khaṇḍa*, the second word deludes him into a belief that it may mean the stuff out of which *modakas* are made. Imagine his disappointment to find that it meant a piece of song and not an eatable. The celebration of Cupid worship is pleasing to him only because it is an occasion for receiving presents. His release from fetters is not in itself

so much a matter of joy to him as the immense helpings of *modakas* that followed his freedom.

Vasantaka certainly betrays a weakness for all sorts of presents and gifts. He is glad that, besides his release, he has also been given a pair of silken garments and ear-rings as presents. Earlier, he demands from the king a reward before putting into his hands the picture of the heroine. The king has to satisfy him. And so, when Vasantaka brings the joyful news that the king's beloved is not only well but that the king will be able to meet her also in person, the king voluntarily offers him a gold bracelet. Vasantaka dons it on his wrist and says with complete satisfaction, " Ah ! now I will go to my Brāhmaṇī and show her my wrist decked with a bracelet of pure gold. "

Vasantaka bubbles with mirth. He dances on the stage. But it will be more correct to say that the maids lay their hands on him, and make him jump about. When Vasantaka is able to free himself, he runs excitedly to the side of the king, quite pleased with his performance.

But, on another occasion, the Vidūṣaka's exuberance brings only distress to the king. The king is happy to have met Sāgarikā in the plantain grove. But the queen surprises him by coming unexpectedly on the scene. The king explains his own joyful appearance as due to the blossoming of Navamālikā. Imagining that the queen has accepted the explanation, Vasantaka spreads his hands and starts dancing in triumph, thereby dropping the picture canvas and exposing the king's secret. Vasantaka tries to save the awkward situation by remarking that the king was doing his own portrait—a difficult art, indeed ! But he is unable to account for the portrait of Sāgarikā. He swears by his sacred thread that the second portrait is non-existent—a bluff, which even a sympathetic friend could hardly swallow, much less the angry queen. Vasantaka is relieved to find that the ' untimely blast ' of the queen has left them without doing any damage. But the king knows that there is no ground for any consolation.

In describing the queen as an 'untimely blast of wind', Vasantaka was really giving an expression to his timid nature. The queen's maid, Susaṅgatā, discovers the Vidūṣaka and the king with the picture canvas, and jestingly threatens to report the matter to the queen. The simple Vidūṣaka is alarmed. He urges the king to pacify the maid with a present. True to his nature he believes that the maid could be bribed with a present.

Nevertheless, his fear is genuine. A vivid narration of the progress of the battle is enough to cause a tremor in his heart. He appeals to Vijayasena to be brief in his description. He mistakes the Sārikā on the Bakula tree for a goblin. He hears imaginary sounds. Even the king's assurances do not help him. But when, a little afterwards, he learns the truth, he gets angry with the bird and rushes at it, raising his stick, which is 'crooked like a wicked person's heart,' resolved to bring the Sārikā down, 'like a ripe Kapittha fruit'. The king is sorry both for the imaginary fears of the Vidūṣaka as well as for this unnecessary show of heroism, because the bird was really speaking very sweetly. Vasantaka compensates for this loss by reporting the speech of the bird. Both of them follow the bird to the plantain grove, where the king unexpectedly meets Sāgarikā. Vasantaka's folly has a silver lining.

Vasantaka is not altogether stupid. He correctly gusses the arrival of the ladies in the Makaranda garden from the tinkling sound of their anklets, which the king had imagined to be the humming of the bees. The possession of the Ratnamālā by Sāgarikā sensibly leads him to conjecture that she could not be a maid but must come from a noble family. And when he learns, later, that his conjecture was right, he is pleased with his own cleverness. And once, at least, his remark has almost a prophetic significance: The king is propitiating the angry Sāgarikā (act ii). Seeing that she is not easily pleased, Vasantaka remarks, "Here is another queen Vāsavadattā, indeed!" The king suddenly drops Sāgarikā's hand, which he

was holding, fearing that the queen has arrived. But the queen really arrives on the spot at that moment, and the king is luckily saved from being found in a situation which, otherwise, would certainly have been embarrassing.

Though Vasantaka is innocent of any kind of knowledge either of a lore or of an art, he is unrestrained, unlike the Vidūṣaka in *Priyadarśikā*, in his enthusiastic appreciation and in his spirit of mirth. He compliments Śrīkhaṇḍadāsa for making the Navamālikā bloom to perfection and, thus, surpass the queen's favourite Mādhavī creeper. He is in a jubilant mood at the festivities in honour of Cupid. He notices the youthful ladies playing, with syringes of coloured liquid in their hands, and dancing to the tune of music and the rhythm of drum, as the scattered fragrant powder fills the open space. He draws the king's attention to the furtive glances of courtesans, as they gleefully cry out when hit by the coloured liquid from syringes. He is equally attracted by the two maids as they enter dancing a vernal dance. He does not fail to observe the beauty of the Makaranda garden, where the dust of the mango blossom, tossed by the Malaya wind, has raised a regular canopy, and a welcome is offered to visitors by the mingled notes of humming bees and cooing cuckoos. His description of darkness and his appreciation of Sāgarikā's beauty have an aesthetic note, albeit conventional.

Vasantaka's attachment to the king is more genuine than that of the Vidūṣaka in *Priyadarśikā*. He is pleased to please the king. He congratulates the king for the Navamālikā blossoms, knowing what proud interest the latter takes in that creeper. The prospect of a meeting with Sāgarikā (act iii) fills him with joy and he is happy to become the bearer of this glad news to the king who, he is sure, will be more pleased with it than by the gain of the Kauśāmbī kingdom. The secrecy successfully observed about the king's meeting with Sāgarikā impels him to open hilarity. Vasantaka really likes his handsome friend, the king, whom he compares to Cupid. He

not only runs errands for the king but tries to help him also. It is true that the idea of bringing in Sāgarikā dressed as Vāsavadattā has originated with the maid Kāñcanamālā; but Vasantaka is a party to the plot. Unfortunately the ruse miscarries, for no fault of Vasantaka, by Vāsavadattā arriving too early for the schemers. Vasantaka's explanations are of no avail and he is removed from the spot in fetters by the order of the queen.

Vasantaka had considered himself to be wiser than Bṛhaspati. He was sure of the success of the scheme. Vasantaka's boast is proved to be unreal. But his concern for the king is genuine. Hence, Kāñcanamālā's compliment that Vasantaka outdoes the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa in his anxiety for *sandhi* and *vigraha*, meaning, not the strategy of peace and war but, union (with Sāgarikā) and discord (with Vāsavadattā).

Vasantaka's interests are those of his royal friend. When he learns from Susaṅgatā that Sāgarikā has been packed off to some unknown destination, he is very much moved. He breaks into tears and declines to take the Ratnamālā. He is persuaded to accept it only by the cònsideration that the jewel necklace may bring some comfort to the king so cruelly deprived of his love.

And Vasantaka rises to the occassion when the king is about to rush into the fire that has enveloped the harem. He tries to stop the king from this precipitate action. But in his concern for rescuing Sāgarikā, the king pushes him away and runs into the fire. Vāsavadattā goes after the king. Vasantaka then jumps ahead and says, " Queen, I will lead the way."

Vasantaka is more prone to emotion and excitement than the Vidūṣaka in *Priyadarśikā*. His simple sentiments are the internal signs of his simple nature, as his wild dancing, loud laughter, clapping of hands and clicking of fingers are the external signs of his childish temper. However, in his concern for the king Vasantaka touches a height that was not expected of this bubbling, babbling fool.

X

ĀTREYA

(in *Nāgānanda*)

भोः युष्माकं पुरतोऽहं दास्याःपुत्र्याः खलीकृतः । तत् किं मम इह स्थितेन ।

—Vidūṣaka, in Act III.

The portrait of Ātreya is drawn in colours which are different from those that Harṣa used in painting his other two Vidūṣakas. In these colours are tinges which are, no doubt, familiarly conventional. For instance, Ātreya, is a Brāhmaṇa. As such, he displays great love for food. His belly blazes with the fire of hunger in proportion to the progress of the sun towards the zenith. When he is hungry he can have patience neither with the aesthetic delights of the hero nor with his sentimental ravings. He must go and grab whatever roots and fruits he can lay his hands on. When the Nāyikā is accepted by the hero's parents as a bride for their son, Ātreya's first thought is happiness for the couple and he dances with joy. But on second thought he realises that the celebration of the marriage is going to give him an opportunity for having real food to his heart's content. He probably has his desire fulfilled. And, in addition, he receives, as a friend of the bridegroom, certain formal honours. He is anointed with fragrant unguents. A wreath of flowers is placed on his head. Ātreya is very much pleased.

Ātreya is not without common-sense. Moving on the Malaya mountain in the company of the hero, Ātreya finds that the heroine is avoiding them out of bashfulness. Ātreya approaches her with a mild reproach: "Lady, is this the custom in your penance grove," he asks, "that a guest is not welcomed even by a word?" Mitrāvasu requests the hero to

accept the hand of his daughter. The hero is attracted towards the heroine, but is not aware that she is Malayavatī herself. He, therefore, excuses himself by stating the fact. The heroine misunderstands his words and swoons away. Ātreya comes forward in this distressing situation and wisely advises Mitrāvasu to approach the hero's parents and obtain their consent to the marriage.

Ātreya is the hero's friend and would have loved to assist him in matters of love. But this opportunity is denied him because the hero is interested in ideals of ascetic life and does not care for worldly things.

Ātreya argues with the hero. The hero, according to him, is wasting his precious youth in waiting upon his parents, who are not far away from the ultimate end of human existence. The pleasures of kingly life and the duty of preserving the kingdom are awaiting the hero. But the serene Jīmūtavāhana is firmly resolved to dedicate his life to the service of others.

Though baffled, Ātreya persists in his endeavour to bring about a change of heart in the hero. He describes how the Malaya breeze, heavily loaded with the perfume of sandal and delightfully cool with particles of spring water, is as thrilling as the first embrace of an eager beloved. He invites the hero's attention to the Tapovana which harbours, in the thick shade of its glossy trees, a multitude of creatures, undisturbed by the profuse effusion of the fragrant smoke of holy oblations. He notices the deer listening with closed eyes to the strains of music, turning their necks to the direction of the sound, and forgetting to swallow the half-chewed mouthfuls of grass. But Ātreya's enthusiastic appreciation of the surrounding beauty meets with only a cold approval from Jīmūtavāhana. Alas, even the beauty of the maiden, who was rendering that song, fails to produce any striking impression on the mind of the hero! Ātreya is forced to drag the hero into the presence of the maiden.

Luckily for Ātreya, once Jīmūtavāhana is in the presence of

the heroine, his heart catches the warmth of youth. He charmed by her comliness. For some time he neglects the care of his parents, and becomes love-sick.

Ātreya has an opportunity of becoming the hero's companion in love. But he does not know how to produce a diversion from the anguish of unfulfilled love. He suggests that the hero may revert to his routine of waiting on the parents; alternatively, he asks him to turn to the slab of moonstone; but all, to no purpose. Ātreya then tries to linger on a narration about the hero's beloved, and induces him to paint her portrait. He praises the hero's skill and succeeds in drawing a smile on his face. Later, Jīmūtavāhana meets his beloved and stands holding her hand. Ātreya has a solitary opportunity of enjoying himself : " Friend, " he remarks, " the Gāndharva marriage is accomplished. So, leave her hand."

But the position of Ātreya as a companion in love is weak. The ascetic idealism of the hero has deprived him of the usual function of a Vidūṣaka. The hero may be temporarily love-sick. But the settlement of the marriage by the parents on both the sides, has robbed the play of erotic motive. The Vidūṣaka, having no real function in a comedy of love, has sunk into the position of a comic butt, an object of ridicule and laughter for others.

In this respect, Ātreya's *Brāhmaṇya* provides the ground for fun. Ātreya is going to the garden to meet the hero (act iii). He has left the marriage party only a while ago. The presents he has received are with him. The fragrance, both of the unguents applied to his body and of the flowers in the wreath he is wearing, attracts a swarm of bees towards him. Ātreya woefully realises that the honours he so joyfully received as a friend of the bridegroom have brought him into a calamity. What can he do ? He has an idea. He could use the pair of red garments given by Malayavatī to cover his body, from head to foot, in the feminine fashion. Thus protected, he could defy the accursed bees !

But then the drunken Viṭa enters on the scene along with the Ceṭa. He mistakes Ātreya for the Ceṭī Navamālikā who, he imagines, is avoiding him because he has failed to see her for a long time. The Viṭa runs up to Ātreya, embraces him by the neck, tries to push the *tāmbūla* in his mouth, falls at his feet and makes an appeal to give up anger. The poor Ātreya holds his nose, turns away his face at the offensive smell of liquor, realising that if he has avoided one *madhukara* (bee), he has fallen into the hands of another *madhukara* (drunkard)! At this moment the Ceṭī Navamālikā enters. She is at first angry to see the Viṭa propitiating 'some other woman' by falling at 'her' feet. However, she soon realises her mistake, thanks to Ātreya howling at the Viṭa. But she is lured into mischief and deliberately keeps mum. The Ceṭa, however, has noticed the Ceṭī and requests his master Viṭa to leave Ātreya alone. In the meanwhile, Ātreya removes his veil and reveals his pitiable identity.

The drunken Viṭa is angry, because he thinks that Ātreya has played a deliberate trick on him. He abuses him as a 'brown monkey' and orders the Ceṭa to hold him fast, till he is attending on Navamālikā. The Ceṭa obeys his master. While the Viṭa is at the feet of Navamālikā, Ātreya makes a vain attempt to run away. The cautious Ceṭa pulls him by his sacred thread, which snaps in the scuffle. The Ceṭa now turns on Ātreya with, "You brown monkey! where are you running?", and drags him by coiling his upper garment round his neck.

Ātreya turns to Navamālikā for help. She laughs at him and suggests that she would intervene if he fell at her feet, touching the ground with his head. Ātreya flies into wild rage at the audacity of a mere maid. Oh! the impudence in asking Ātreya, the very friend of the king and, above all, a Brahmin, to fall at the feet of a whore's daughter! But the maid's menacing attitude is not to be changed by Ātreya's anger. For a while, she turns to the Viṭa and points out to him that the Brāhmaṇa is a friend of the bridegroom and, therefore, in treat-

ing him roughly the Viṭa was running the risk of incurring the displeasure of Mitrāvasu. The Viṭa obeys the command of his beloved. He embraces Ātreya by the neck and apologises to him for having made fun of him. But the Viṭa is anxious to know whether the epithet 'chief of drunkards' (*mattapālaka*), used by Ātreya for him a short while ago, was seriously intended. Ātreya hastens to say that it was not so intended. The Viṭa is reconciled. He folds his upper garment to make a seat for Ātreya. Ātreya is asked to take his seat. He does so, hoping that the Viṭa is getting sober. Now, the Viṭa asks Navamālikā to sit beside Ātreya, so that he could do the honour to both of them simultaneously. The Viṭa then orders the Ceṭa to fill a glass of wine. The Viṭa takes the glass in his hand, puts flowers in it, bends on his knees, and proffers the glass to Navamālikā. She sips the wine smilingly. The Viṭa then holds the glass before Ātreya, assuring him that the wine is untasted by any one, and that it has acquired a special fragrance in virtue of its contact with Navamālikā's mouth.

The face of Ātreya twitches into a nervous smile. He reminds the Viṭa that he is a Brahmin and cannot drink wine. The Viṭa asks him to prove that he is a Brahmin. But alas! Ātreya's sacred thread had been snapped by the rough Ceṭa. Navamālikā is awefully amused. But she suggests that Ātreya can still prove his caste by reciting a few words from the Vedas. Ātreya should have been dumbfounded; but he has the resourcefulness to say that the Vedic words have evaporated by the smell of liquor. But Ātreya knows in his own heart that he has been trapped by the maid. There is no way out but to beg mercy of her. The threat of the maid has come true. The pitiable Brāhmaṇa is at her feet.

Navamālikā had not certainly wanted all this from Ātreya. She was trying to get a bit of fun only. She, therefore, stops Ātreya, falls herself at his feet, and explains to him that she regarded him as 'a relation' and so, took the liberty of a joke. She begs his pardon, and assures the Viṭa that he is a real

Brahmin. The Viṭa follows the example of his beloved. He apologises to Ātreya for the offence he had given him under the influence of intoxication. Ātreya mercifully accepts all apologies and grants his pardon. The party goes to a liquor shop. Ātreya hopes that he has escaped narrowly from an accidental death. He heaves a sigh of relief and turns to a well to wash off the sin of contact with a drunkard.

But the misfortune of Ātreya is not over yet. After bathing at the well he joins the hero's party. Jīmūtavāhana asks him why he is late. Ātreya is too shrewd to own his recent humiliation. He bluffs that he was delayed on account of his curiosity in watching the drinking assembly of the Siddhas and the Vidyādharas that had gathered for the marriage feast.

The hero is in a happy mood. He says to the heroine that he should have spared her the trouble of going up to the Kusumākara garden. For, her face is veritable Nandana, her eyebrows being creepers and her red lip being foliage. The heroine's maid is delighted by this handsome compliment, and digs at Ātreya. Ātreya reproaches her for her vanity. "Don't be puffed up by the praise of a woman's beauty," he says. "Men are equally handsome. Only, nobody paints (their beauty), out of sheer jealousy!" The maid immediately gets into a mischievous mood and offers to 'paint' him. Ātreya is too pleased to believe that the maid was really serious. But with the insulting abuses still fresh in his mind, he implores her to do him the favour. He says, "I will be given a new lease of life!....Nobody will then call me this or that brown monkey!"

The maid asks him to sit properly. She reminds him that, after keeping awake for the whole night for the marriage ceremony, when he had dozed off he had made an excellent picture. She would like to paint him in that pose. She persuades him to close his eyes and assume that pose. Ātreya cheerfully follows all the instructions of the maid. The hero, too, compliments Ātreya, because the maid had chosen him for 'painting'.

The maid then presses tamāla leaves between her palms and with that liquid blackens the face of Ātreya!

That was the maid's idea of painting! Ātreya raises his stick in impotent rage. But the heroine laughs at the practical joke. And the hero is mum. The silent approval of both of them takes the wind out of Ātreya's sail. He turns to Jīmūta-vāhana and says helplessly, "Do you see? The whore's daughter has insulted me in your presence. What's the good of my staying here now?"

And with his face blackened Ātreya leaves the stage. The maid runs after him to appease his anger. But Ātreya does not return. He has gone for good, carrying haughtily his disgrace and discomfiture.

XI

VAIKHĀNASA

(in *Kaumudīmahotsava*)

विदूषकः—इदानीं प्राप्तराज्यानां अशित्वा पीत्वा तिष्ठताम् ।...
निपुणिका—यदा त्वं राजा तदा इदं राजकार्यम् ।

—Act V.

The maid Nipuṇikā's first impression about Vaikhānasa is that he resembles ' a monkey by his appearance and a donkey by his voice '. But none of these conventional traits are used for any comic treatment. The reference is only a reminder that Vaikhānasa is a Vidūṣaka.

Vaikhānasa's love of food, however, receives a particular emphasis. The pearl necklace lying bundled up on the ground is to him like a heap of cooked rice. When he is moving about in the second act and nobody seems to take notice of him, he feels sore that he is treated like ' a camp guest '. But when afterwards he sees the hero's nurse he is joyful and remarks, " I was moving about begging ; but I have obtained a regular invitation ". When the hero is engrossed in painting the picture of the heroine, in the third act, he grumbles that he is hungry. In the fifth act, the love-lorn hero turns to him for diversion. Vaikānasa suggests, " Shall we go to the dining-hall, or the kitchen ? " In fact, his advice to the hero is to forget the past love. " Now that you have regained your kingdom, " he says " eat, drink and be happy. " This is Vaikhānasa's idea of ' royal duty '. The maid naturally observes that Vaikhānasa may eat and drink and think that he has done his royal duty if he were to be a king some day ! '

Vaikhānasa is timid. He mistakes the picture-scroll for a

serpent and is frightened for a moment. He asks the heroine's maid to paint his picture. But when she contemptuously dismisses him he turns to propitiate her and gives her the pearl necklace.

As a friend of the hero Vaikhānasa jokes about his love and shows him sympathy too. The hero has lost his kingdom. Now he has fallen in love. It is 'like a blind man falling in a well'. Vaikhānasa, therefore, feels sore about the love-sick condition of the hero. When he finds the hero gazing at his own picture drawn by the heroine, Vaikhānasa asks him, "Are you admiring her skill in drawing or your own handsome figure?" Later, when the hero is lamenting, he says, "It's no use howling like a lonely jackal. Speak to me."

But Vaikhānasa is sympathetic also to the hero. He is unwilling to pick up the necklace lying on the ground, thinking that it may be an act of thieving. But he picks it up when the hero urges him to do so. He satisfies the hero by explaining to him, later, why he handed over the necklace to the heroine's maid. He encourages the hero to paint the heroine's picture, to talk about his own condition and conducts him to an arbour —all with a view to providing a diversion to the hero from his depression and sorrow of unfulfilled love. The hero is moved to tears on seeing the necklace, once again, in the last act. Vaikhānasa comments with sympathy, "A tale about good men is apt to move one to tears. And when it's a question of an ornament previously worn by them, tears are inevitable." The hero's desire is fulfilled. But he is unable to believe in his own good fortune. Vaikhānasa, again, says, "Trust the horripilation that has covered all your body." In fact, if an indirect reference were to be trusted, a proof of mutual friendliness will be found in the fact that the hero, in his love-sick condition, seeks the lap of Vaikhānasa as a pillow to soothe his burning head in sleep.

Vaikhānasa does not play any particular part in the development of the story. But he is not altogether detached

from it. There are minor functions that he fulfils in the play. Probably one important task that was entrusted to him by the minister Mantragupta was to contact the hero's nurse, Vinayandharā, who was moving with the heroine's household, disguised as a Parivrājikā. Vaikhānasa succeeds in contacting her though without any special effort on his part and he considers himself to be a 'snātaka' in spite of being dubbed as a fool. The necklace which he hands over to the maid serves to establish a bond between the hero and the heroine. The same is true about the picture-scroll. Vaikhānasa carries the picture to the hero along with a messsage from the nurse whom he has fully acquainted with the hero's condition. And though preparing the heroine's mind for accepting the hero's love has apparently fallen to the share of the nurse, the encouragement which Vaikhānasa gives to the hero in drawing the heroine's picture on the same scroll serves to strengthen the mutual bonds of love. The picture becomes, as it were, a symbol of the union. The necklace, too, assumes the significance of a love token. The priest delivers it to the hero through Vaikhānasa. It is through these small tasks, albeit menial, that Vaikhānasa contributes his share to the development of love.

However, Vaikhānasa is a pale figure by the side of the Vidūṣakas in the classical plays. He shares with Māṇavaka and Māḍhavya their love of food; but Vaikhānasa repeats their jokes. He has their stupidity; but it affects neither comic laughter nor the development of the story. His devotion to the hero is probably genuine; but it nowhere rises to any touching level as in the case of Santuṣṭa or Maitreya. Yaugandharāyaṇa had entrusted an important task to the Vidūṣaka in establishing a contact with Udayana and he achieves it successfully. To Vaikhānasa success comes in contacting the nurse without any special effort on his own part. Vaikhānasa has neither the delightful stupidity nor the shining wit which are to be found in a genuine Vidūṣaka. He is a pale, insignificant shadow conventionally attached to the hero.

XII

KAPIÑJALA

(in Karpūramañjarī)

ईदृशं राजकुलं दूरे वन्द्यताम् यत्र दासी ब्राह्मणेन समं
प्रतिस्पर्धां करोति। तद्द्यप्रभृति निजवसुन्धराब्राह्मण्या:
चरणशुश्रूषको भूत्वा गृहे एव स्थास्यामि।

—Vidūṣaka, in Act I.

The Vidūṣaka in *Karpūramañjarī*, a Prakrit *Saṭṭaka*, is generally known in the play by the name of Kapiñjala Brāhmaṇa. The name suggests that he is a Brahmin of ugly appearance.

From his own reference to his costume and make-up it appears that Kapiñjala had a beard and big, basket-like ears. A parrot talks of uprooting his top-lock of hair. His name is indicative of a brown monkey-like complexion.

His love of food is suggested in his talk. 'A Brahmin languishing with hunger', he says, 'dreams of *modakas*'. He compares the Sindhuvāra blossoms to rice-pudding and the Jasmine flowers to a buffalo's milk. In a humorous reference about the queen he mentions milk and butter-milk.

Kapiñjala is ignorant and unlettered, but boasts that he is a bit of a scholar. He says that his father-in-law's father-in-law was employed to carry books in the house of a scholar! The maid Vicakṣaṇā, who knows that Kapiñjala is 'like a beam of a balance which carries no marks of weight', comments that he has come to learning only by *anvaya*, a remote family connection. Kapiñjala is angry and remarks that those who are born in the Akālajalada family get learning by *anvaya*, inheritance. The exchange of words is enough to start a quarrel between the Vidūṣaka and the maid. Kapiñjala is

ready to demonstrate his abilities. He is aware that 'musk is not sold either in a village or jungle', and 'gold can be tested only on a touchstone'. Yet he is prepared to prove his worth in the presence of the king and the queen, confident that 'one does not require a mirror to look at a bracelet on one's own wrist'. The demonstration is immediately arranged. Both Kapiñjala and Vicakṣaṇā are asked to describe the spring season. They recite poetic verses by turns. It, however, transpires that the maid has a better poetic gift. The king who was probably expected to support his friend, the Vidūṣaka, acknowledges the superiority of the maid. Kapiñjala is sore and nettled. The maid says that the Vidūṣaka has the ability to use tender expression, but that it is wasted on paltry subjects. Kapiñjala, however, is not to be consoled. He and the maid start abusing each other heartily in the royal presence. From words they come to blows. Kapiñjala threatens to break the maid's ear and smash her face; she promises to cut his hand! Out of sheer disgust over his discomfiture Kapiñjala bemoans the state of affairs in a royal household. 'If wine and 'cow's five products' are to be kept in the same vessel', 'if glass and ruby are to be employed in the same ornament', if, in other words, 'a low-caste maid is to be allowed the same status with a Brahmin', it is better, he feels, to bid goodbye to such a royal house, stay at home and give devoted attention to one's own wife! Kapiñjala does not merely talk angrily, he leaves the king and the queen and goes out. The queen feels that 'there cannot be fun without Kapiñjala.' She wants him to be called back. The maid says it is no use. And Kapiñjala shouts from a distance that if a jester were wanted in the palace the maid could be dressed up as one; she would play the fool. He was going.

The episode ends in ridicule and discomfiture for the Vidūṣaka. He goes out but returns again. And from this moment onwards till the end of the story he plays altogether a new role.

The king is in love with Karpūramañjarī and Kapiñjala, as the king's friend, proceeds to help him in the matter. He is not yet quite sure about the maid who, he knows, is given to fooling. But she promises that she would not mix jest with work. They make peace with each other and join in a mutual plan to assist the king in gaining his object of love. Once this pact is made, Kapiñjala has no hesitation in acknowledging the superiority of the maid and of her elder sister in poetic composition. He describes Vicakṣaṇā as the 'Goddess of Poetry on the earth', and her sister Sulakṣaṇā as the 'Goddess of Poetry in all the three worlds'!

As the hero's companion Kapiñjala occasionally adopts the humorous attitude. Thus, at the beginning of the third act, when the hero is talking loudly to himself about the lady of his love Kapiñjala comments, "Why are you standing here croaking like a hen-pecked husband?" Afterwards the king narrates his dream. Kapiñjala regales him with a lengthy description of his own fantastic dream. The king understands the moral that day-dreaming yields no results!

But such an attitude is only occasional. In company with the maid, and independently, Kapiñjala renders active help to the hero in love. He suggests to the Magician to produce Karpūramañjarī. At the queen's behest he invites Karpūramañjarī to narrate her personal story. He offers his upper garment to her as a seat. Taking the hint from the maid he brings the hero to the Emerald seat in the garden from which he can watch the heroine swinging in a swing. A little later, he takes the hero behind the Tamāla tree so as to be still nearer the heroine. He and the maid have been able to do this in spite of the jealous eye of the queen. When the king compliments him on this piece of work he remarks that, "The old cat (the queen) was made to drink sour milk and think it was milk!"

Kapiñjala encourages the hero to talk about his love and

go ahead with the affair. In the matter of talking Kapiñjala displays a volubility which probably is consistent with his caste and creed. But he displays also a fine poetic ability which is contradictory to his alleged lack of learning and his comic role. However, it is there. He describes the hero and the heroine and their love-lorn condition in a neat poetic style. To him is assigned, again, the description of the moon and of the theatre-play presented in celebration of the festival. In fact, if the king is an Aphorist, Kapiñjala, on his own statement, is an elaborate Commentator. Kapiñjala is prepared to do even menial service for the king and the heroine. He offers to bring the cooling ingredients to alleviate the hero's 'heat of love'. He fans the heroine when she is perspiring in the closed chamber. He communicates to the king the news of the heroine's imprisonment.

Although the credit for the manoevures by which the hero and the heroine are able to meet each other after the queen put the heroine under strict vigilance and lock-up, must go to the Magician, who is also responsible for arranging their wedding, Kapiñjala and the maid do everything else, between them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love. The king admits that the Vidūṣaka is a real help to him. "Who else will do my work?" the king says; "Who but the moon can raise the tide of the ocean?" Kapiñjala finally officiates as a priest at the wedding ceremony and the king grants him 'a hundred villages' as his fees.

In the assistance that Kapiñjala renders to the king in presiding over the marriage as a priest and in supplying long poetic descriptions there is, however, no glimpse of a comic character. Whatever little there is of the Vidūṣaka is in the first act. In the remaining acts of the story, Kapiñjala is a social companion of the hero, the king's helpmate in love. There is a sharp cleavage between these two roles. Nothing has been done to fuse them together. Kapiñjala ceases to be a Vidūṣaka and becomes a professional associate of a king.

XIII

CĀRĀYAṆA

(in *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*)

ही ही भो एते खलु पण्डिता अलीकविकल्पैः विस्मृतफला इव मर्कटा मूलमलभन्तः पल्लवग्राहिणो भवन्ति । मूर्खाः पुनः पनसवनपालका इव मूलमनुसरन्तः फलं प्राप्नुवन्ति ।

—Vidūṣaka, in Act II.

The appearance of Cārāyaṇa is that of a traditional Vidūṣaka. He looks like a monkey with big, basket-like ears. It comes out indirectly. Cārāyaṇa conducts the king to the sport pavilion, Kelikailāsa and draws his attention, among other things, to the picture of a monkey in a stable. The king remarks that it is Cārāyaṇa's own picture. Cārāyaṇa is angry and dismisses the words of the king as a 'bad man's speech'. But later, he admits his baldness.

Cārāyaṇa is a Brahmin. He blesses the king with his sacred thread that the latter's dream vision of a beautiful young girl may turn into reality.

Like all Brahmins Cārāyaṇa must be fond of food although his love of food is not specially exhibited. Cārāyaṇa draws his analogies occasionally from the province of food. Wanting to learn the secret of the king's love he realises that 'the knots of mango stems do not yield juice till they are pressed'. His heart is bursting with curiosity 'like a ripe pomegranate about to burst open'. He compares the king invoking his dream vision to a person who, dreaming of *modakas*, sends out invitation to the entire town.

Cārāyaṇa is ready to accept any kind of gift. The king is decked with cosmetics and new apparel for his marriage. Cārāyaṇa picks up for himself whatever is left over. He demands a gift as the king's companion on the eve of the royal wedding.

Cārāyaṇa pretends ignorance about reading and writing. He confesses that he has never learnt to write. Cārāyaṇa is observing a vow of silence on the eve of his second marriage. He replies to the king's question by scribbling something on the floor. The king, 'though conversant with eighteen scripts', is unable to decipher Cārāyaṇa's reply! Cārāyaṇa's inability to read may be gathered from the fact that he asks the king to read the poetic letter inscribed on a palm-leaf instead of reading it out himself. The king is in love and has put the queen out of his mind. Cārāyaṇa remarks that it is like a lazy person forgetting readily his lessons. As for himself Cārāyaṇa is a Mahābrāhmaṇa. He has learnt half a line of his own Sūtras!

Cārāyaṇa makes a show of cowardice too. Hearing words spoken behind the crystal wall he asks the king to tie up the top lock of hair, imagining that the voice which spoke the words was that of a supernatural being. Struck against the crystal wall and stuck in their movement, Cārāyaṇa offers to display his 'heroism' in bringing the 'spirit' behind the wall down to the ground by his crooked stick. However, he feels that it is the Brahmarākṣasas who are talking. "After all", he observes, "goblins love night".

Cārāyaṇa, thus, possesses all the traits that a Vidūṣaka is expected to possess. He has physical deformity. He is a Brahmin. And he has the Brahmin's typical lack of education, fondness for food and gifts, cowardice and pretentiousness. What is more, he has, unlike many Vidūṣakas, a Brāhmaṇī, a wife by the name of Piṅgalikā; and he is blessed with many a children.

But Cārāyaṇa is prepared to play the fool. He falls an easy victim to a practical joke that the queen plays on him. The queen gets a slave boy dressed up as a bride and makes Cārāyaṇa enter on his second marriage. The so-called bride is supposed to be a daughter of the Purohita of Mṛgāṅkavarman who is staying as ransom with the king Vidyādharamalla, the

hero of the *Nāṭikā*. The name of the bride is Aṁbaramālā (Sky-garland); and the names of her parents are Śaśaśṛṅga (Hare's horn) and Mṛgatṛṣṇikā (Mirage). The hero immediately sees the joke but does not interfere. Cārāyaṇa gets ready with all pomp and flourish and goes lustily through the ritual of wedding. He fails to see the joke even when the slave boy commits an obvious error in his speech in referring to himself in the masculine. Cārāyaṇa goes on to correct the error by pointing out that the 'bride' should use feminine gender in her speech. It is only when the slave boy throws away his disguise that Cārāyaṇa realises that he has been fooled. And then, he works up his temper and hurls a string of abuses at Mekhalā, the daughter of the queen's nurse and the queen's companion, who had taken a leading part in arranging the mock wedding. Cārāyaṇa fumes and frets and raises his stick, but to no purpose. He withdraws himself from the scene, stands behind a thicket of Navamālikā and hangs his head down.

However, Cārāyaṇa is not like the usual Vidūṣakas. Though discomfited he is not to be humbled. He nurses a sense of his injury and plans a revenge. He takes a maid, Sulakṣaṇā, into his confidence. He asks her to conceal herself in the Kesara tree at evening time. When it becomes pitchy dark and Mekhalā is found in the Pramoda garden, Sulakṣaṇā is to address her in a nasal voice and announce that Mekhalā will die on the evening of the full-moon day of Vaiśākha. Mekhalā will get the fright of her life. She will beg the 'Supernatural voice' to tell her a remedy to counteract the premature death. Then Sulakṣaṇā is to announce that Mekhalā can hope to prevent her death by duly and ceremoniously honouring a Brahmin who is well-versed in Gāndharva Veda; she must fall at his feet and crawl between his legs. The hoax works and Mekhalā and the queen are all taken in by it. The ladies of the harem prepare themselves for the ritual. The king assures that Cārāyaṇa will fulfil the role of the required Brāhmaṇa. The ritual is done. Mekhalā falls at the feet of Cārāyaṇa. He

raises his stick and raves at the imaginary 'messengers of death', and offers his protection to the unlucky girl. Finally Mekhalā crawls between his legs. At this moment Cārāyaṇa sings out of joy and shouts that he has succeeded in 'mounting the chariot of love'—in bringing a pleasure-woman of the harem under his feet! He announces loudly to Mekhalā that it is his revenge for the mockery of a second marriage which was inflicted on him. Mekhalā bursts into tears. The queen pleads that the joke was improper. But Cārāyaṇa replies that if the queen inflicted a joke on him because he was the king's companion, he had an equal right to return the joke because Mekhalā was the queen's companion. The episode dissolves in tears and anger, Cārāyaṇa caring for neither.

Cārāyaṇa certainly has a temper and he loses it easily. On another occasion when he asks for a wedding present as the hero's friend and the maid euphemistically tells him that he will get the 'crescent moon' (meaning, that he will be unceremoniously expelled), Cārāyaṇa turns upon her angrily and promises her that he will twist the faces of the whole brood of palace maids so that they will be abhorred by their paramours. One of the maids says that Cārāyaṇa has the temper of the irascible Durvāsas. She is probably right.

But it is unusual for a Vidūṣaka to exhibit such a temper. Even if it were understood as a possible reaction of the mockery to which he was subjected, the malice in planning a revenge and in threatening punishment is still a strange trait in a comic character. A Śakāra could be malicious, menacing and yet comic. But Cārāyaṇa is not a villain.

In fact, Cārāyaṇa is not a genuine Vidūṣaka also. He appears to play his role professionally. He makes fun of the king when the latter becomes sentimental over his dream love. He describes the halting movements of the king as those of a bull weighted down with a heavy yoke. He is prepared to leave the king who is standing for a long time in one place to

let him 'grow like a tree'. The king feels concerned when Cārāyaṇa's practical joke on Mekhalā brings tears to the eyes of the queen. But Cārāyaṇa says that the queen was not shedding 'pearls' so that the king should be concerned about them. Cārāyaṇa describes the heroine who is playing with a ball as 'doing thumping and thrashing'. The wife of a brother-in-law, he says, is one's 'half a wife'. When Kuvalayamālā, who was married to the disguised Mṛgāṅkāvalī, is offered to the king as his bride, Cārāyaṇa remarks that she is no longer a half wife but has become a 'full wife' to the king.

There is a lot of wisdom in Cārāyaṇa's statements. "When the moon has spread his rays, how long can the night lotus remain without opening her flowers?" This is his remark in encouraging the hero to approach the heroine. But he advises him to stick to the queen also: For, "a Tittirī in hand is better than a pea-hen in future." In the second act he encourages the king by pointing out that, "A doll made of moonstone will not but melt by lunar rays." In the third act Cārāyaṇa wavers between loyalty to the queen and pursuit of new love: He blames the king for neglecting the queen as 'a lazy person neglects study'. But at the same time he says, "New blossoms will not appear unless the old leaf is removed. A musk-deer loves to pluck herbal shoots that are newly formed and is not interested in a restricted patch of field."

The king rightly says that Cārāyaṇa's speech has no restraint. Cārāyaṇa is voluble.

Cārāyaṇa moves with the king as his companion, directs him to various spots and describes the scenery. But he has no hand in the development of the love theme. He neither helps the king directly in securing for him his object of love nor does he create any complications by his so-called stupidity and, thus, indirectly help the development of the plot. Cārāyaṇa is a conventional tag to the hero. His wit and wisdom are professional. He is put in situations which are meant for comic effect only and have no bearing, or very remote, if at all, on the

central theme.

As a matter of fact, Cārāyaṇa's stupidity as a comic character is suspect. He professes ignorance and lack of education. But his observations are those of a sane person. He has not only an ability to describe scenic effects poetically, but he can produce a metrical composition, too, on varying levels of experience. What is more, he can recite a Sanskrit verse with the king. The king is constrained to observe that Cārāyaṇa 'has developed Sanskrit too'. Cārāyaṇa can quote from Dharmaśāstra. He is an expert, we are assured by the king, on Gāndharva Veda. And he gives an exhibition of singing and dancing on the occasion of the king's wedding which, though a little superfluous, is not altogether comic. Cārāyaṇa's stupidity is, therefore, a part of his professional equipment. And he is quite conscious of the advantage in donning a fool's cap: The wise, he says, are deluded by fanciful considerations; they forget, like monkeys, the real fruit and, thus, unable to reach the root, have to content themselves with the leaves only. The fools, on the other hand, straightway make for the root like keepers of the bread-fruit grove and get the fruit.

Really speaking, Cārāyaṇa is a Brahmin who has a family of his own and is devoted to his wife. He appears to have been employed as a fool and is, therefore, required to fulfil his job. But Cārāyaṇa's wit and wisdom, having nothing brilliant about them, are deprived of authentic comic context. His malice, too, does not reveal the quality of laughing at one's self. Cārāyaṇa, therefore, lacks the capacity to grow into the stature of Gautama. Nor can he fall in line with Śakāra who, in spite of his villainy, has the gift of laughing at himself. Cārāyaṇa is a jester who either does not love a jest or is unable to tolerate a joke at his own cost.

In introducing this contradiction in the characterization of Cārāyaṇa, Rājaśekhara has deprived him of the essence of a comic character. For, it is not that incongruity which makes a comic character.

XIV

THE VIDŪṢAKA

(in *Karṇasundarī*)

एष सम्प्राप्तः भर्ता समं ब्राह्मणविटेन ।

—The Queen, in Act IV.

The Vidūṣaka in *Karṇasundarī* bears no personal name. That he is a Brahmin is not to be doubted. Both the king and the queen refer to him, once, as a Brahmin though the reference is not flattering. The Vidūṣaka has a wife called by the general name of Brāhmaṇī.

The Vidūṣaka displays some characteristic traits. For instance, he feigns tremor when the account of a serious battle is being narrated. His pleasure in good food and gifts is indicated. The angry queen is propitiated; and, to the delight of the Vidūṣaka, she has seen to it that his belly is properly filled with *modakas*. The Vidūṣaka, on his part, hopes to win over the queen to the king's love-affair by offering her *Svastivāyana*. He demands *Svastivāyana* when the king is wedded. On the eve of the royal wedding the Vidūṣaka receives the king's old ornaments.

The Vidūṣaka feigns stupidity and exhibits childish behaviour. The king narrates to him how he saw the Vidyādhara girl in the garden and how she kindled love in his heart as a result of which the garden became a source of temporary torment to him. The Vidūṣaka asks, " What shall we do of the garden which has caused all this trouble ? " Later, he asks the king why lovers prefer the side-long glances of the beloved to a straight, face-to-face, meeting. Further, he suggests to the king to present himself before the heroine when she was narrating to her friend her own condition of love; and the king thinks

that the suggestion was 'rash'. The Vidūṣaka indulges in snapping of fingers in reply to a sentimental question by the king, and in dancing at the news of military victory. The king naturally calls the Vidūṣaka 'stupid'.

But the Vidūṣaka's stupidity and childish behaviour are only conventional to such an extent that they are contradicted in the play itself. The Vidūṣaka displays a cleverness, not found in a stereotyped comic character, in learning the secret from the queen's maid. It is the maid who is trying to avoid the Vidūṣaka, as 'the moon avoids Rāhu'. But the Vidūṣaka stops the maid, calls her bluff off by pulling out the 'plantain leaves and lotus stalks' from under her upper garment and extracts a confession from her that those cooling appliances were meant to alleviate the love-torture of Karṇasundarī. It is the maid again who has to request the Vidūṣaka to guard the secret of love.

In his relation with the king the Vidūṣaka's attitude is partly that of a jester and partly that of an associate. He advises the king to give up his pursuit of love and follow the queen. He says to the king, "You will talk sweetly to the queen, fall at her feet and somehow win her over; but she will call me 'a wicked Brahmin' and blame everything on me." Later, when he gives the news of the heroine's response to love and the king is too happy to believe the report, the Vidūṣaka remarks that 'lovers are mad people' not to believe even in direct proof. And in order to convince the king of the truthfulness of the news he says, "I swear by the feet of my Brāhmaṇī"!

But the Vidūṣaka also helps the king by fulfilling his routine tasks. He conducts the hero through the garden, the Cupid's park and the Ripple-house; describes the southerly wind, the trees and the blossoms; and thus, provides the usual diversion.

In the second act he takes the hero to the Pleasure-grove and brings him to the lake where a meeting with the heroine

takes place. In the third act he brings the hero to the rendezvous.

He drops warnings of the queen's arrival. And though on one occasion the king is annoyed to find that 'the wretched Brahmin's inauspicious prophecy is fulfilled,' it nevertheless saves an awkward situation in act two. However, in the third act the king is surprised by the arrival of the queen and the Vidūṣaka also has no answer to give to explain the situation away. At the wedding, however, he correctly advises the king to submit to the whole procedure silently.

The Vidūṣaka performs some small duties for the king. At the king's behest, he finds out from the maid the secret of Karṇasundarī's love-sick condition. He brings a letter of love from the heroine to the king.

Thus, by encouraging the king in his love, by joining him in poetic descriptions of love and of scenic beauty and by performing small tasks entrusted to him the Vidūṣaka helps the king. But the Vidūṣaka is not entitled to any real credit. The meetings with the heroine are not planned by him ; they are a lucky coincidence. The queen, therefore, is not correct in attributing the initiative to the Vidūṣaka. Also, the queen's ruse of deceiving the king by marrying him to her own sister's son (who resembles the heroine) is foiled not by any effort of the Vidūṣaka but by the altertness and tact of the Minister.

Beyond executing the usual and conventional functions—and that too, with no originality or brilliance—the Vidūṣaka does practically nothing. Though a conventional jester he does not jest, as a Vidūṣaka is expected to do. In fact, the Vidūṣaka is more like an ordinary helpmate to the king than a laughing companion. His poetic descriptions, his use of Sanskrit (I. 50) and his occasional formal address to the king—all go to show that the Vidūṣaka is not really cast for the role of a fool. The queen is perfectly right in calling the Vidūṣaka 'a Brahmin Viṭa'.

XV

CAKORA

(in *Candralekhā*)

अहो विदग्धतायाः विलासः ।

—The King, in Act II.

The Vidūṣaka in the Prakrit *Saṭṭaka Candalehā* is called Cakora Brāhmaṇa. And as a Brahmin his particular trait which has received a great emphasis is his love of food. It colours most of his statements and observations. When he starts describing the great city, in competition with the maid Candanikā, he draws his analogies deliberately from the province of food. Thus, he compares the loud voice of the cuckoos to that of well-fed Brahmins, the flying bees to a column of smoke rising from the kitchen and the fragrance of flowers to the smell of mustard fried in ample ghee! He thinks that the wonderful jewel had served its purpose in revealing the wonderful girl to view and that it had no further use, as husk is useless after rice-grains are procured. The hero is pining for a meeting with the heroine. Cakora has the information that she is to be found near the well in the royal garden. He says to the king, " Why do you cry and waste your time when a sweet dish of cooked rice, milk and sugar has been brought for you ? " He describes the words of the heroine as a *drink* of nectar to the ears and her appearance as a *feast* to the eyes of the king. It would not be altogether wrong to say, in the words of Kālidāsa, that food is the only subject for a glutton.

Again, as a Brahmin, Cakora is given to some conceit. He dismisses the maid's poetic description of the city (act i) as a feeding on dregs left by others, implying that his own description based on novel similes drawn from the province of food is

original! The king's right eye throbs; Cakora interprets the omen, being a Brahmin, as suggestive of sovereignty. Cakora is prepared to take a loan of ' poetic faculty ' from the king. But he refuses the same from the low-caste maid although she is willing to give it. " Who will go to a Castor tree, " says he, " in preference to the Pārijāta ? " The king once pays Cakora a compliment for his polish and learning. Cakora boasts, " The script-arrangement by Vyāsa, Vālmīki's poetic composition and Bṛhaspati's theory of six political remedies are no objects of wonder. " So, the erudition of Cakora is quite in the nature of things ! That is why, when the king is inclined to praise the queen for the courteous reception given by her to Cakora, he contradicts him and asks, " Does not Indra's queen feel honoured when Nārada arrives ? Is not Lakṣmī full of praise when Vasiṣṭha makes his appearance ? "

But Cakora is not without his conventional stupidity. He gives an absurd description of the city as already noticed. He shows disbelief in the powers of a mere jewel to grant one's wishes. He asks the king to throw away the precious jewel after it has secured the Nāyikā, and receives the epithet ' bull ' (Gosañjña) from the king! In the queen's apartment he babbles in his sleep and lets out the secret of the king's meeting with the Nāyikā, which results in the queen reinforcing her vigil over the Nāyikā.

Cakora, however, has an interesting explanation for his apparent lack of learning: He says that he has stored his ancestral learning and poetic powers in a box, locked it, sealed it and kept it in the place where his wife sleeps, in fear of robbers in the streets! And this is the reason why he is sometimes required to borrow wisdom from others.

It is a good joke, indeed. But it is a joke only. For the Vidūṣaka is full of practical wisdom and learning which run counter to his pretext of foolishness. When he asks the maid to demonstrate her poetic ability he dictates that the verse shall

contain internal rhymes, shall be in Sragdharā metre and the subject shall be the Malaya breeze. When he pretends disbelief in the super-natural powers of the wish-fulfilling jewel, he observes that a belief in this case is analogous to that in the rise of a hare's horn, appearance of sky-blossoms and manifestation of water in mirage, in short, belief in the impossible. He blames the king for beating about the bush in asking news about the queen in stead of about the Nāyikā. He demands, " Why show a leaf to one who knows the root? Why sell a piece of glass in stead of a jewel in a jeweller's mansion? Why spread jugglar's tricks before one who has tasted the ecstatic bliss of Paradise?" To the king's question whether he got any news from the maids he replies in a similar strain with a series of observations: "Is musk sold in villages? Is *puroḍāśa*, the sacrificial cake, distributed among the Śabaras? Is *pañcagavya*, the five holy products of a cow, brought to crows?" The king is really amazed at the intellectual brilliance of Cakora. Cakora suggests that it is not the brilliance but its absence that would have been a matter for wonder!

As a companion of the hero Cakora renders all possible help to his royal master. Cakora is responsible for directing that the wish-fulfilling jewel be uncovered. His apparent disbelief in the miraculous powers of the jewel goads its putting to a practical test. And when it is done he wishes for the king 'a maiden who will be a jewel of maidens'. Cakora is, thus, responsible though indirectly, for procuring the Nāyikā for the king. He at once notices that the king has fallen in love with her. He sympathises with the king's emaciated condition. He proceeds to provide appropriate diversion by taking the hero to various spots of beauty, by describing the beauty of the Nāyikā and by encouraging the king to do so. The queen had managed to get the lover's talk reported to her through a Sārikā put in the throat of a doll. She is angry. But Cakora assures the king not to worry and consoles him appropriately. He assists the king by furnishing

him news about the Nāyikā from time to time, by bringing a letter from her and, later, by directing the hero to a meeting with her near the garden well. In an earlier meeting he gives a timely warning of the queen's arrival and saves the lovers being exposed. Of course, he slips once in divulging the secret of love by his sleep-talk ; but it has, luckily, no disastrous consequences.

If to this service, albeit small, is added Cakora's power of correct observation demonstrated in reading the astrological marks on the body of the Nāyikā to be indicative of her future status as an Empress, in explaining how the maid Candrikā got the confidence of the Nāyikā, in guessing from the jingling anklets the arrival of the queen and in inferring the musical talents of the Nāyikā from the presence of the lute,—Cakora emerges as a clever companion of the hero.

The truth appears to be that Cakora is only pretending to be a fool. Though in describing scenic effects the Vidūṣaka is fulfilling a conventional function, his poetic faculty and use of elaborate language are not confined to these occasions only. He is normally given to florid expression and it is not comic unless it is deliberately made to appear so. He describes the city elaborately. He enters into a sort of poetic competition with the bards and the maid in describing 'the moon-rise'. His picture of how the Nāyikā looked at him (II. 9. [57-59]) is a beautiful *Paryāyokta.* He joins the king in describing the Nāyikā (act ii. 24 to 32) in alternate metrical lines. As the king remarks on another occasion, 'It is a charming display of polished learning'. And it is not a trait to be found in the comic vein of a Vidūṣaka.

XVI

MAHODARA

(in *Adbhutadarpaṇa*)

कथम् अद्य नर्तितव्यम्। अथवा ईदृशी एव दुर्जीविका शैलूषोपजीवकानाम्।
—Vidūṣaka, in the Prologue.

न केवलं मम कामतन्त्रेषु सचिवः, अपि तु महाराज्यतन्त्रेषु अपि।
—Rāvaṇa, in act VI.

The Vidūṣaka in this late Sanskrit play appears first in the dramatic prologue and takes part, with the Sūtradhāra, in performing the preliminaries. His real name is Romanthaka and he has been assigned the role of Mahodara, the humorous companion of the Lord of Laṅkā. The Sūtradhāra is aware of the nature of a Brāhmaṇa and has taken the precaution of filling his belly with *modakas* before inducing him to play the assigned role. To this extent the Vidūṣaka is happy and is flattered too; because, as a Brahmin, he got the honours first even before the theatre ritual was done. But he does not like the idea of 'dancing' with a full belly. He blames the profession of actors which demands this duty at the sacrifice of physical comfort and ease. He blames the Sūtradhāra for his 'itch' for dancing. The Sūtradhāra assures him that he can sleep till Rāvaṇa appeared on the scene. Moreover, the Vidūṣaka is assigned not any *aṅgahāra* or dance, but only a speaking part as a Brāhmaṇa. The Vidūṣaka is relieved and goes out to get his nap.

Even as an actor the Vidūṣaka has displayed some typical traits: love of food and honour, and a disinclination to sacrifice creature comforts. When he appears in the role of Mahodara, in the fifth act, he enters on the stage holding his loaded stomach with both his hands. He has fed himself with marrow, fat, well-cooked meat and desserts like *modakas*. His mouth is

distorted by over-eating, his breath is laboured and he has perforce to walk very slowly! The name Mahodara, which means pot-bellied, coupled with the other physical details completes the picture of the traditional, laughable appearance of the Vidūṣaka.

Once, during the exhibition of the dramatic illusion, Mahodara shows that he is frightened on hearing Lakṣmaṇa's orders to the monkeys to lay a seige to Laṅkā. Rāvaṇa assures the fool that it is a reproduction of a past incident only. In this Mahodara displays the conventional cowardice of a Brahmin.

There is another instance of his apparent stupidity: Viddyujjihva, one of the ministers of Rāvaṇa, has been commanded to get news about Sītā who is confined in the Aśokavanikā. Since it was forbidden for any 'male' to enter into that place, Viddyujjihva asks Mahodara to go ahead and find out what Sītā was doing. Mahodara is angry, because he thinks that he is not treated as a 'male'. He blurts out, "How now? Am I not a man? My wife Kuṇḍodarī delivers a baby every year. She knows how much a man I am." This is a typical utterance of the Vidūṣaka: It combines his apparent stupidity with a boastful nature and humour with downright obscenity.

But these shades of characterization are probably meant as an indication only that Mahodara is a Vidūṣaka. For, contrary to the usual dramatic practice, Mahodara is mentioned by his real name and very rarely by his general appellation Vidūṣaka. Further, he is attached not to the hero but to the villain of the play, Rāvaṇa. And though he is called 'Narmamitra' or 'Narmasuhṛd', it is not the humorous aspect but the witty, that is to say, the clever aspect of his character that is particularly accented in the play. Mahodara is the chief priest of the Brahmarākṣasa family to which Rāvaṇa belongs. He is an expert on the affairs of sex. Rāvaṇa calls him 'a minister of the department of great sex-passion'. His proven ability in subduing the hearts of women conquered and captured by

Rāvaṇa has induced the latter to appoint Mahodara to the task of winning Sītā over, by assisting the minister Viddyujjihva or by independent design.

And so, Mahodara moves about in the play as a companion of Rāvaṇa who is consumed by his love for Sītā. In playing this role Mahodara shows remarkable commonsense and practical wisdom which could have served the ulterior interest of Rāvaṇa and saved him from ruin. Mahodara has his eye more on the final outcome of Rāvaṇa's passion than on its immediate fulfilment which, he thinks, both impossible and disastrous. Rāvaṇa's desire to be united with Sītā is, in his opinion, like asking for the union of darkness and moonlight. He openly censures Rāvaṇa by describing his passion as a 'bad, wicked desire'. And he argues with Rāvaṇa very ably and reasonably. He advises Rāvaṇa to stop the war and return Sītā to her husband —either the real Sītā or her counterfeit image. Rāvaṇa is afraid that making peace with Rāma would involve splitting up the kingdom of Laṅkā with Vibhīṣaṇa. Mahodara argues that in settling peace a definite condition could be stipulated whereby Vibhīṣaṇa will be given a kingdom far away from Laṅkā and partition avoided. But Rāvaṇa is not sure that Vibhīṣaṇa will not make trouble for him even if he were far away from Laṅkā. Mahodara observes that Rāvaṇa will have no peace unless he conquered one of the two—Rāma or *Kāma* (passion for Sītā). And he is more in favour of controlling the latter. He puts a *dilemma* before Rāvaṇa : If Rāma were alive, Sītā will not show any affection for Rāvaṇa. Contrarily, that is, if Rāma were not living, Sītā will not live herself. Either way, Rāvaṇa has no chance of having his desire fulfilled !

The logic of Mahodara is irresistible. And he wins the praise of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who are able to watch the show and listen to the conversation with the help of the *adbhuta darpaṇa*, the 'miraculous mirror'. But Rāvaṇa's passion proves to be stronger than his reason. He bows down

to this priest of his and requests him to find out some remedy in order to make Sītā favourably disposed towards him.

Thus constrained, Mahodara tries to do what he can for helping and comforting Rāvaṇa. Mahodara would have liked Rāvaṇa to capture Rāma. But 'consideration for Sītā' prevents Rāvaṇa from doing so. The idea of returning 'illusory' Sītā to Rāma—which Rāvaṇa could have done on account of his control of magic—does not appeal to Rāvaṇa. Mahodara suggests 'use of force'. But that too Rāvaṇa is not inclined to accept, because of the advice of Grand-father, Brahmā, not to rape an unwilling woman. Likewise, Rāvaṇa does not wish to assume the 'form' of Rāma, though he has the power to do so; because such deception has proved to be ineffective in the case of Sītā. With the war on the threshold of Laṅkā, Rāvaṇa wants to see Sītā in a happy mood in her custody. It would be enough for him to go into the battle and win it. Mahodara, therefore, takes Rāvaṇa to the extremity of the pleasure-mount where Trijaṭā and Saramā have arranged for the benefit of Sītā a magical dramatic performance representing the incidents of the battle.

During this performance Mahodara sustains the interest of Rāvaṇa; diverts his passion-ridden mind to the aspects of the show; dispels his illusion about the interference of the monkeys in his movement by pointing out that Rāvaṇa's hair were caught in the branches of a tree and consequently his crown was displaced. He advises Rāvaṇa to remain concealed and silent as the show is on. When the illusory Lakṣmaṇa in the magic show accuses Rāvaṇa of cowardice in loitering in the harem and avoiding war, Mahodara soothes Rāvaṇa by pointing out that 'a son of a man is incapable of knowing the prowess of a hero of the three worlds'. He flatters Rāvaṇa by observing that his valour, exhibited even in description, brings on horripilation. But the show is not really in favour of Rāvaṇa. It depicts his gradual fall and the defeat of his army. Rāvaṇa

is painfully angry at this betrayal done by Trijaṭā and Saramā and is ready to kill them. Mahodara succeeds for some time in controlling Rāvaṇa and keeping him engaged in witnessing the performance. But obviously it could not go on for ever. It is only the sight of the death of Kumbhakarṇa and Indrajit in the magical show that sends Rāvaṇa into a swoon and prevents the slaughter of Saramā and Trijaṭā. Mahodara consoles Rāvaṇa who now rushes into the battle.

Mahodara promises to come back after receiving the gift of *modakas* given for Rāvaṇa's victory march into the war. But he has no occasion to do so. The battle is lost. Rāma destroys one and all. Mahodara, however, and a few like him are spared, we learn, probably out of regard for their being Brahmins or priests, and certainly on the condition that they changed their policies.

It is obvious that Mahodara is rather a counsellor on matters of love and shows his ability in understanding politics too. His being a Vidūṣaka is, therefore, a matter of convention which, though allowed to remain in the play, has no scope for development.

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